

Where's Toki?

by André Ngāpō

School Journal
Level 2, May 2019
Year 4



Overview

This TSM contains information and suggestions for teachers to pick and choose from, depending on the needs of their students and their purpose for using the text. The material provides many opportunities for revisiting the text.

Cousins Hoani, Leilani, and Mitch are searching for their dog, Toki. When they realise he is trapped in a cave, they think about going in to rescue him. However, the potential danger and the possibility that the cave might be tapu stops them. Hoani, the narrator, shows particular sensitivity towards, and respect for, tikanga Māori. The story includes a retelling of a traditional story about Ruakuri Cave at Waitomo (Tainui/Ngāti Maniapoto). "Where's Toki?" has a happy ending, with Toki escaping the cave from another exit and bounding back to rejoin the delighted children.

This text:

- is told in the first person with a child narrator
- introduces readers to aspects of tikanga such as karakia and having respect for tapu
- contains messages about observing safety rules in the bush.

A PDF of the text and an audio version as an MP3 file are available at www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz

Texts related by theme

"Kuri" SJ L2 Oct 2015 | "Harwoods Hole" SJ L2 May 2019 | "Lost in the Bush" SJ L2 Nov 2016 | "Tū" SJ L2 Aug 2015 | "Rātā me te Rākau" JJ 57 | "Heartbeat" SJ L3 June 2012 |

Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

We have retained the links to the National Standards while a new assessment and reporting system is being developed.

For more information on assessing and reporting in the post-National Standards era, see: <http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-and-reporting-guide>

Leilani looks frozen in fear. "So, there might be people buried here?"
"Probably not," says Mitch. "The entrance is too small."
Toki whines and whimpers. "He sounds really scared," says Leilani. "We should go in."

"We better say a karakia first," I tell them. "Dad taught me one about respect. It lets Tāne-mahuta and the creatures of the forest know we don't mean any harm. And it will help to bring good luck to our mahi."

But I begin the karakia anyway. As I say each word, I try to imagine Toki in the cave. On the walls, tiny glow-worms sparkle like beautiful stars. But the rock is cold and wet,

some abstract ideas that are clearly supported by concrete examples in the text or easily linked to the students' prior knowledge

Mitch and Leilani come to the clearing.
"We need to go home,"
"It's getting late. It'll be dark."
Leilani shakes her head.
"I'm not going back," I
"I can hear Mitch and Leilani, my cousins, calling him, too ..."

Usually, he never goes far, and when we call, he barks to let us know where he is. This time, he's been missing for nearly an hour. I can hear Mitch and Leilani, my cousins, calling him, too ...

some compound and complex sentences, which may consist of two or three clauses

"And it might be a tapu cave like Ruakuri," I add.
"Ruakuri?" says Leilani. "Where's that?"
"Near Waitomo. Koro told me that long ago, a chief found a cave there, guarded by wild dogs. The dogs were protecting their pups inside the cave, and they attacked the chief. So he went and got some warriors, and they returned and cleared out the dogs. After that, the people used the cave as a sacred burial place. When the chief passed away many years later, he was buried on a ledge in the cave entrance. That part of the cave is tapu because his body's still there."

Some places where information and ideas are implicit and where students need to make inferences based on information that is easy to find because it is nearby in the text and there is little or no competing information

"No," says Mitch. "We need to get help."
to imagine Toki in the cave. On the walls, tiny glow-worms sparkle like beautiful stars. But the rock is cold and wet, and there are stalactites and stalagmites looking like giant teeth, ready to snap shut.
In my mind, I can see Toki alone and scared in the jaws of the cave.

figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, or personification



Reading standard: by the end of year 4

VOCABULARY

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “leash”, “sprinted”, “clearing”, “muffled”, “thicket”, “warriors”, “sacred”, “burial”, “ledge”, “whines”, “whimpers”, “respect”, “creatures”, “glow-worms”, “darkening”, “energy”, “growling”, “struggling”, “yelping”
- Geological features, including words related to caving, such as “stalactites”, “stalagmites”, “rocky overhang”
- Words in te reo Māori, including “marae”, “tapu”, “karakia”, “mahi”
- Names of people, places, and atua, including “Toki”, “Mitch”, “Leilani”, “Hoani”, “Ruakuri”, “Waitomo”, “Koro”, “Tāne-mahuta”
- A euphemism “passed away”
- An idiom “reading my mind”
- Phrasal verbs (a verb combined with an adverb and/or preposition that together form a single semantic unit), including “sprinted off”, “cleared out”
- Contractions, including “I’m”, “he’s”, “it’s”, “it’ll”, “they’re”, “can’t”, “where’s”, “didn’t”, “let’s”

Possible supporting strategies

- Identify words or phrases that may be unfamiliar to the students. Explain that the story contains some words in te reo Māori and support the students to pronounce them correctly.
- Remind the students of strategies for working out the meaning of unfamiliar words, for example, using the context, using the illustrations, or breaking the word into its parts.
- Share ways of using association to learn and retain words, for example, a stalagmite “might” reach the ceiling and a stalactite holds on “tight” to the ceiling.
- Generate a list of phrasal verbs, making sure to include examples from the story. Write the verbs and adverbs or prepositions on separate pieces of paper. Give each student one slip and have them move around the classroom to find a person they can make a phrasal verb with. Have the pairs of students develop a sentence using the phrasal verb.
- Identify the words used to describe the various noises Toki makes, for example, “long howl”, “barks”, “muffled [bark]”, “whines and whimpers”, “growling”, “yelping with excitement”, “whimpers with joy”. The students could try to imitate how these might sound. This could lead on to a discussion of words to describe how people talk. Have the students work in small groups to record as many talking words as they can in a given time. *Can you provide a word for the human equivalent of each of Toki’s voices?*
- Discuss why contractions are often used in dialogue. Illustrate the formation of contractions by using coloured building blocks or writing onto colour cards. Create class lists of contractions and practise breaking them apart and putting them together.
- *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 cave systems, including features such as stalactites, stalagmites, glow-worms, and the fact that caves can have more than one entrance
- Some knowledge of Tāne-mahuta and his role as kaitiaki of the forest and its creatures
- Some knowledge of karakia and of tuākana-teina relationships.
- Some knowledge of the concept of tapu

Possible supporting strategies

- Draw on the students’ prior knowledge about cave systems and/or make connections with the information and illustrations in “Harwoods Hole” (also in this Journal).
- Have the students discuss what it feels like when a pet goes missing.
- Remind the students to use the illustrations as well as the words to identify the setting.
- Invite the students to share stories about Tāne-mahuta and identify the roles of different atua in te ao Māori.
- Make connections to other atua or gods that the children might know.
- Discuss the concept of tapu and have the students share examples of actions and things that are considered tapu in te ao Māori. Make connections with ways that tikanga is followed in the classroom, for example, saying a karakia at the start of the day or not sitting on desks.
- Discuss the way that burial places are considered sacred across all cultures and have the students discuss reasons for this.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- A first-person narrative in largely chronological order, except for the story of Ruakuri Cave
- Short paragraphs
- A mix of simple, compound, and complex sentences
- Dialogue, some of which is unattributed
- Figurative language, such as similes, metaphors, and personification
- Some alliteration
- Repeated words or phrases, including “Come on” and “waiting ... waiting ...”

Possible supporting strategies

- Remind the students of similar, first-person narratives they have read. Have the students think, pair, and share the features of stories such as plot structure, order of events, time markers, use of dialogue, and characterisation.
- Revise what similes, metaphors, and personification are and how they create visual images and evoke sensations.
- Help the students to understand the connection between ideas in the longer sentences by identifying the clauses, phrases, linking words, and punctuation.
- Discuss the various effects created by repeating words, for example, creating a sense of time passing and/or growing tension.



Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

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

Level 2 – Language features: Show some understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics.

Level 2 – Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Level 2 – Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people's customs, traditions, and values.

Possible first reading purpose

- Find out what happens when a pet dog goes missing in the bush.

Possible subsequent reading purposes

- Discover how the children in the story respond to the dilemma
- Learn about showing respect to Tāne-mahuta and for the environment
- Learn about the concept of tapu and its relationship to cave burials
- Identify and discuss the main messages in the story and the author's purpose for writing it.

Possible writing purposes

- Write a story about being lost or about losing a pet
- Recount a time when you and some others had to respond to a tricky situation
- Describe a setting using metaphors
- Explain what it means to respect the natural environment, including keeping yourself safe.



Instructional focus – Reading

English Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts; Language features: Show some understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

Social Sciences Level 2 – Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people’s customs, traditions, and values.

First reading

- Share the purpose for reading.
- Read the first paragraph together and then share predictions and questions about what has happened to Toki and what the children will do.
- Remind the students to revise their questions and predictions as they continue reading.
- Give the students the opportunity to read and enjoy the rest of the story in its entirety.
- After reading, discuss whether there were any parts of the story that were initially unclear or confusing, for example, when Toki’s muffled bark seems to come from two different places. Have the students share the strategies they used to make sense of what was happening.

If the students require more scaffolding

- Prompt the students to make connections with times that they have lost a pet, emphasising the mix of emotions such situations evoke. Similarly, have the students share any experiences they have had with caves or being in the bush at dusk.
- Address any vocabulary challenges the children may have. Refer to the suggestions in the Vocabulary section of “Text and language challenges” on page 2 for teaching ideas.
- Remind the students to use the illustrations as well as words to identify how the characters are feeling and what is happening.
- Model how to ask questions during shared reading, for example, *I wonder whether the children will stay in the bush until it gets dark. If they do, will they get lost as well?* Remind the students to evaluate the effectiveness of the questions they ask.
- Before reading, provide sticky notes for the students to note their questions and any ideas and vocabulary they are not sure of. At the end of the first reading, discuss the questions they still have.
- Ask the students what they can see in their minds when Hoani is describing the cave. Some students may need support to infer that the description of the cave is based on Hoani’s imagination rather than the actual cave. Point out that the thought bubble around the image of Toki in the cave provides an additional clue.
- After discussion, have the students reread any sections they initially found confusing, identifying any clues the writer provides about what is going on.

Subsequent readings How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose. Where possible, have the students work in pairs to discuss the questions and prompts in this section.

The teacher

Have the students reread the story, and then work in pairs to analyse the ways the various characters respond to the situation.

They could complete a graphic organiser that identifies:

- the decisions the children make in the story
- how each character is feeling at different stages of the story
- what motivates or influences the way each character responds to the situation.

Ask the students to identify a key moment in the story and decide how to “freeze-frame” the moment. The groups could present their freeze-frames to the class, with each character explaining what they are thinking or feeling.

The teacher

Have the students share their knowledge and understanding of ngā atua in te ao Māori.

Ask them to discuss why Hoani says a karakia.

Prompt the students to make connections across the text by identifying other examples of Hoani being respectful. Students from other cultures could share stories of how they might show respect or bring good luck in their cultures.

The students:

- make inferences about what each character is thinking or feeling at the time, justifying their inferences using information in the text or illustrations
- use information about each character to identify their motivations and influences
- identify key moments in the story to freeze-frame, for example, Leilani running towards the cave or the moment near the end when Toki’s face suddenly reappears through the fern bush
- discuss each character’s thoughts or feelings at the moments shown in their freeze-frames, and explain these thoughts or feelings to the class.

The students:

- make connections to other stories they know that are about Tāne-mahuta
- use information in the text to identify that the purpose of the karakia is to show respect and to make them safe
- identify information in the text that shows how Hoani sees the world and what is important to him.

Subsequent readings (cont.)

The teacher

Reread the section about Ruakuri Cave together, then lead a discussion about the concept of tapu and its relationship to respect and mana. Have the students provide examples of things that are tapu or sacred and the various ways that people can show respect for these.

Discuss how stories are handed down from one generation to the next and what these stories can teach us about how to live or what is important.

Ask the students to discuss Hoani's motivation for sharing the story of Ruakuri Cave and Leilani's response to it.

- *Did Hoani intend to scare Leilani or did he have a different purpose?*

The teacher

Discuss ways that people can show respect to the forest or to other parts of the natural world.

Have the students evaluate the writer's purpose for writing this story.

METACOGNITION

- *What mental images did you see as you read the text? How did these images help you to understand what was happening?*
- *How does the writer show us what shapes Hoani's understanding of the forest? What connections did you make with the ways you see the natural world?*
- *How can stories about a place change the way we view or experience that place?*

The students:

- identify examples of things that are tapu or sacred and how this influences people's behaviour, for example, washing your hands after visiting an urupā (cemetery) or not putting the Quran on the floor
- make connections with stories that are handed down through whakapapa and at family gatherings and why these stories are special
- infer why Hoani shared the story of the cave and what influenced his response to the idea of entering the cave
- think about how they would feel visiting a cave that had been used as a burial site and discuss various ways that respect is shown to the dead across cultures.

The students:

- share their experiences of being in the bush and beliefs they have about the natural environment
- think about the writer's purpose for writing the story and give their opinion about how successful he has been in achieving that purpose, using examples from the text to justify their answers.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *I noticed you rereading the section of the text where the children could hear Toki's bark coming from two different places. That's a really useful strategy when you're not too sure what is happening, especially if you read a little more slowly and check that you understand as you read.*
- *Your story about giving the first fish you caught back to Tangaroa was a great way to make connections with some of the deeper ideas in the story. Sharing your story helped others in your group to make their own connections.*



Reading standard: by the end of year 4



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English Level 2– Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics; Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.

Text excerpts from “Where’s Toki?”

Page 26

“Toki!” I call. “Toki! Where are you, boy?”

I’m really worried. This is all my fault. I let Toki go, and he sprinted off into the bush.

Usually, he never goes far, and when we call, he barks to let us know where he is. This time, he’s been missing for nearly an hour. I can hear Mitch and Leilani, my cousins, calling him too ...

Examples of text characteristics

OPENING PARAGRAPH

The opening paragraph of a story plays an important role in setting the scene, introducing key characters, and drawing readers into the story.

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Have the students analyse the opening paragraph of the story, identifying the information it provides about the setting, the characters, and the situation.

Have the students evaluate the effectiveness of the opening paragraph in terms of:

- how well it grabs the attention of readers
- what questions it creates
- the way it sets the scene for the story.

Discuss how opening the story with direct speech can engage readers’ interest.

Set the students a task of writing an opening paragraph for a story with more than one character, one of which is an animal. Encourage them to find ways to show what type of animal the story involves without directly stating it, for example, by describing the way the animal moves or the sounds it makes.

Have the students peer-review their opening paragraphs, discussing how well the paragraphs grab their attention, what questions they evoke about what will happen next, and what they predict will happen. After the students have revised their opening paragraphs, have them share them with the class. Students can choose either to develop their own story further or to use an opening paragraph written by someone else that sparked their imagination to develop a story.

Page 30

Leilani looks frozen in fear. “So there might be people buried here?”

“Probably not,” says Mitch. “The entrance is too small.”

Toki whines and help whimpers.

ALLITERATION

Alliteration is the repetition of sounds, usually created by using the same first letter for neighbouring words.

Alliteration can help focus a reader’s attention on a section of text or help create a feeling or other effect with the repeated sound.

Remind the students of the meaning of alliteration and have them share an example with a partner. Discuss ways that alliteration can make a sentence or phrase stand out and capture a reader’s attention.

Have pairs of students identify examples of alliteration in the text. Ask them to read the examples aloud to see how they influence the image they create in their minds or affect how they feel. Examples include: “frozen in fear”, “whines and whimpers”, “snaps shut”.

Explore the associations that various sounds produce by giving the students other examples of alliteration and asking them to respond.

Prompt the students to look for opportunities to use alliteration in their own writing.

Page 30

But the rock is cold and wet, and there are stalactites and stalagmites looking like giant teeth, ready to snap shut. In my mind, I can see Toki alone and scared in the jaws of the cave.

EXTENDED METAPHORS

An extended metaphor is one that continues over more than one sentence. Extended metaphors can strengthen the impact of an image, helping readers to visualise something more clearly.

Explore the way the writer has used similes, metaphors, and personification to describe how Hoani imagines the cave in this excerpt. In particular, support the students to make connections between the simile of the cave features being like teeth and Toki being in the jaws of the cave.

Have the students create a piece of descriptive writing about a setting they find magical or scary, or perhaps both. Encourage them to create two or three different similes and metaphors, seeking feedback on their effectiveness from a peer.

Have the students try extending a metaphor to strengthen its effect. (You may need to remind some students that overuse of a particular literary feature can spoil the intended effect.)

METACOGNITION

- How did you come up with the metaphor you used? What effect or visual image did you want to create?
- How did you hook in the reader in your opening paragraph?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- Your opening paragraph had me hooked. The image of the towering wave about to crash on you made me want to find out what happened next. And the dark shadow you could see in the wave sent shivers up my spine!

Writing standard: by the end of year 4

The Literacy Learning Progressions