



Overview

“In the End” is a fictional recount of the Martha Mine strike, told by a soldier in the First World War who was living in Waihi at the time of the strike. This complex layering will be challenging for some students, but the rich poetic language and colourful expression should be engaging for many readers.

The story provides rich opportunities to examine concepts around comradeship, shared struggles, and the forces that put people on different sides at different times. It also powerfully depicts the human experience of the Martha Mine strike and complements the factual article in the same journal, “War in Waihi”.

It may be helpful to have the story read aloud by a sensitive reader before asking the students to read it themselves. Discussion before, during, and after reading can also include reference to “War in Waihi”.

Texts related by theme

“War in Waihi” SJ L4 Oct 2013 | “A Tour Like No Other” SJ 4.2.11 |

“Tūto’atasi: The Struggle for Sāmoa’s Independence” SJ L4 May 2013

Text characteristics from the year 8 reading standard

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

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

adverbial clauses or connectives that require students to make links across the whole text

What I remembered best about the strike was how quiet and peaceful things were. Well, at least until the rioting and shooting and so forth and poor Fred Evans getting murdered. But through that winter and spring, it was like we were living in a new world. A world where you could hear yourself speak and think. That was because the battery had shut down.

The battery was where they crushed the rock to get the gold out. They used huge steam-driven hammers that pounded away, day and night. My dad used to say the battery was the devil’s forge where sinners made horseshoes for nightmares. I sure made a hellish din. Of course, that was before I knew what it was like having German artillery shells rain down on you for eighteen hours at a stretch.

That’s a different kind of hell altogether.

The poor blokes who worked in the battery packed their ears with cotton and wax, but they still went deaf long before the rock dust choked their lungs and killed them. And then when Dad and the other miners went on strike, and there was no more rock to feed the battery, the pounding stopped. It was wonderfully strange. For the first while, people sort of tiptoed around town and spoke in whispers, as though the silence was made of very fragile glass. You could hear birds singing. You could almost hear the new ferns unfolding. Me, I felt like the headache I’d been born with, the headache I’d had my entire life, had just gone away. I felt light, as if I might float free of the earth.

The days were peaceful; the evenings less so. Downright rowdy, sometimes. The Miners’ Hall would get packed out when union men from Auckland and all over came to Waihi to urge the strikers to hold out. There were some grand roars and ranters among those blokes. I can tell you! I was in the hall with Mum and Dad one night when the great Pat Hickey was speaking, and some fool at the back called out, “Pat, do you believe in the British flag?”

Pat pointed at the union’s blood-red banner displayed on the stage and declared in a thunderous voice, “That is the only flag I admire – the flag of the people!” Well, that nearly brought the house down.

Other nights, there were film shows at the hall. They’d be packed out, too. Westerns were our favourites. We’d sit there with our hearts ready to pop out of our mouths while cowboys on horseback charged towards us, blasting their pistols, as Mrs Hayward pounded away at the piano and her husband cranked the projector. Silent gunfire. What a sweet and foolish notion that seems.



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

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

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

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

Possible curriculum contexts

SOCIAL SCIENCES (Social studies)

Level 4: Understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.

Level 4: Understand how formal and informal groups make decisions that impact on communities.

ENGLISH (Reading)

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

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 enjoy a rich and complex story
- To consider how people respond to local and global community challenges.

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

Possible writing purposes

- To develop and present responses to a community challenge from two or more perspectives
- To write (or rewrite) a narrative for a specific audience and purpose
- To respond to the story in a poetic or dramatic form.

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

 The New Zealand Curriculum

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY:

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, including “platoon”, “silhouettes”, “illuminated”, “stretcher-bearers”, “field hospital”, “battery”, “artillery shells”, “projector”, “coppers”, “strikebreakers”, “scabs”, “blacklegs”, “scum”, “rampage”
- The large number of colloquial words and expressions, including “took the hit”, “I swear to God”, “daft beggars”, “a goner”, “yer”, “dead right”, “a hellish din”, “blokes”, “downright rowdy”, “all over”, “roarers and ranters”, “I can tell you”, “coppers”, “hard-faced bluebottles”, “bully boys”, “scabs”, “I dare say”, “spoiling for a fight”, “tipping the wink”, “took a bullet”, “load of bull”
- The extensive use of figurative language, including “like insects”, “something on my conscience”, “like we were living in a new world”, “made of fragile glass”, “as if I might float free”, “blood-red banner”, “brought the house down”, “hearts ready to pop out of our mouths”
- The complex metaphor: “the battery was the devil’s forge where sinners made horseshoes for nightmares”
- The use of oxymoron, including “wonderfully strange”, “silent gunfire”, “thrilling calm”
- Connotations of the words “coppers” and “strikebreakers”.

Possible supporting strategies

Read through the text carefully to identify words, phrases, and expressions that your students may find challenging. Group these and select one or more groups (for example, archaic expressions; similes) to focus on. Depending on your students, it may be possible to have them work in pairs to find the challenging words and then discuss possible meanings and alternatives. English language learners will need substantial help.

You could also construct a simple glossary with example sentences and definitions of colloquial language, which students could add to. You could illustrate an expression through mime or an example sentence and have the students work in teams to guess the expression.

Before reading, give pairs of students the illustrations from one of the pages. Ask each pair to write descriptions of what they see and any knowledge they have about it (for example, it looks like a war scene, and New Zealand has been involved in both world wars). Then ask them to make predictions about the story (the setting, characters, and/or plot). Have the pairs share their ideas with other pairs.

Before and/or after reading, discuss words that have colloquial, figurative, or connotative meanings. Make sure students understand their meanings and how they change in different contexts. English language learners may benefit from exploring and comparing examples of colloquial, figurative, or connotative meanings in their first language. *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has some useful information about learning vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Knowledge of mining
- Knowledge of strikes, especially in the past
- Knowledge of New Zealand’s involvement in the First World War
- Understanding that people’s decisions, loyalties, and actions may be shaped by many factors
- Understanding the concept of “conscience” and how it influences our behaviour
- Knowledge of how texts may be structured for dramatic and literary effect.

Possible supporting strategies

Read this text in the context of a broader study to support the students understanding of the 1912 miners’ strike. Ensure that students are aware of New Zealand’s contribution to wars and the concept of fighting for one’s country.

Students can explore why people respond to challenges in different ways. For example, “How do people respond to a community challenge?”, “How do they respond to a national or global challenge?”, “Can people on both sides of a conflict be right?”, “What things influence people’s decisions in times of conflict?”

As well as density, the text has some complex concepts. Allow English language learners to explore some of these concepts in their first language before reading.


TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- The two narratives, in two time settings
- Clear voice of the narrator, giving a very personal and subjective retelling of events
- Informal tone and use of colloquial language
- The use of time and sequencing language.

Possible supporting strategies

Remind the students of narratives they know, sharing and listing some common features. Note that narratives can often be written in the first person and in the past tense and retell a significant event.

If necessary, draw a timeline for the story. During reading, students can refer to the timeline and add details to it to help them place the actions and characters.

 Sounds and Words

Instructional focus – Reading

Social Sciences (Level 4 – Social Studies: Understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.)

(Level 4 – Social Studies: Understand how formal and informal groups make decisions that impact upon communities.)

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

Text excerpts from “After All”

Students (what they might do)

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

My mate Don Curry took the hit that killed him on the night of the third of October 1917. We were trying to take a shattered bunch of trees called Polygon Wood, where the Germans were dug in. Our platoon was advancing up a trench that got shallower every yard until it wasn't much more than a muddy ditch that we were crawling through.

The students use their knowledge of text structures and features to identify this as a first-person narrative, recounting a past event. They make connections between the text and their prior knowledge of the First World War to identify the setting. They infer that the narrator and Don are fighting German soldiers. They visualise the scene, using the descriptions. They ask questions about the story and form hypotheses about what might happen next.

PROMPT the students to set a purpose for reading.

- We've been talking about the ways people respond to community challenges. As read, think about what you expect it will be about?
- Share your thinking with a partner and give your reasons.
- As you read, continue to share your thinking about challenges faced by the characters and how they responded to them.
- Ask yourselves questions such as “Why did they make that decision?”, “What would I have done in that situation? Why?”

“Billy, listen. There's something on my conscience ... something I've got to tell you before I go.”

“What's that, Don?” I said, trying not to cry.

“It's about the strike,” he said.

I knew what Don meant straight away. He meant the gold miners' strike in Waihi, in 1912.

The students draw on vocabulary and general knowledge to understand that Don feels guilty about something. They infer that he wants to clear his conscience before he dies. They make connections between this text and “War in Waihi” to synthesise information and form hypotheses, for example, that Don might have done something shameful during the strike.

ASK QUESTIONS to check that the students understand the setting and situation, providing support if necessary.

- What clues helped you to work out what Don and the narrator were doing?
- What connections can you make between the text and things you already know?

ASK QUESTIONS to help the students clarify meaning.

- What does Don mean by “something on my conscience”? Why would a person have something on their conscience? Have you experienced that?
- Why does Don need to do this “before I go”?
- What do you think Don wants to tell Billy? Why do you think that?

DIRECT the students to work in pairs.

- List the words used to describe people.
- Discuss the connotations for each word or phrase. Does it have a positive or negative impact?
- Can you replace each word with one that has a different connotation?

And when Cullen's bully-boys ... the strikebreakers. The scabs, the blacklegs. Men eager to take our jobs.

I dare say there miners with hungry families, willing to work underground for a dollar a day. But some were scum, if you'll pardon the word.

The students infer that Billy was hostile to the strikebreakers, and also that since he was only thirteen, these were probably his parents' attitudes too. They identify synonyms used for the police and the strikebreakers. They make connections between words used in this text and “War in Waihi” to infer that some strikebreakers had little choice about where they worked. They further infer that Billy still did not agree with their actions.

EXPLAIN that asking questions about a text when you're not sure of meaning is a good way to direct your thinking.

MODEL asking questions of the text.

- When I read, “I dare say there were decent men among them”, I wondered why he used the expression, “I dare say”? What exactly does that mean? I'll look it up.
- When I read about men with families to feed, I wondered how the strikers were feeding their families since they were unemployed too. I'll reread “War in Waihi” to see if there is any information there.

“I lied to yer, Billy. I weren't in with the union. I were a blackleg. A scab.”

I stared at him. I couldn't think of a thing to say.

“I been ashamed of it ever since. I were ashamed at the time.”

He looked straight at me then. “I need yer to forgive me, Billy. Can yer do that?”

After a while, I took his hand in mine. “You're all right, Don. We ended up on the same side in the end.”

The students synthesise information across the text to consider why Don lied and how Billy will react. They synthesise what they know of people as they ask and answer questions about what being “on the same side” means here. They evaluate Billy's response and draw conclusions about how and why people's views can change.

PROMPT the students to explain the reasons for Don's decision in 1912 and his request for forgiveness. Ask them to think about Billy's response.

- Why do you think Don lied?
- Why does Billy say he's all right?
- What “sides” is Billy talking about?
- What has changed for Billy since 1912?
- How would you characterise each man? Why?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- You've discussed the changes in Billy's attitudes and given evidence to support your ideas. Tell me why you think ...

METACOGNITION

- What reading strategies were most useful to you? Explain how you used one strategy.
- How did you use the non-fiction article to help you understand the fiction story, and vice versa? Tell us about one place where you did this.

Reading standard: by the end of year 8

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

Social Sciences (Level 4 – Social Studies: Understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.)

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

Text excerpts from “After All”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

I looked up, and there were men standing alongside the trench, just silhouettes in the flickering light. Don shouted, “Get down, you daft beggars! Get down!” Because he thought they were our guys. But they weren’t. One of them threw something into our trench, then disappeared. There was a bang and a flash, and Don was illuminated for a split second, and then he fell back on top of me.

SENTENCE LENGTH

Varying the length of sentences can create specific feelings or effects.

SHOW, DON’T TELL

Showing readers what happened, rather than telling them, allows the reader to engage with the action and participate in the reading experience. Readers often need to use clues and their own knowledge to infer meaning that is not stated explicitly.

PROMPT the students to consider their writing intentions.

- What would work best for your audience: fiction or non-fiction?
- Why would it be most suitable for your purpose?
- How will you plan your writing?

EXPLAIN how the writer has used sentence length and “show, don’t tell” for impact.

- In this extract, Mal Peet shows what is happening. I can visualise the scene and understand how hard it would be to identify the soldiers. The use of short sentences that start with conjunctions has a tense, dramatic effect.
- I infer a hand grenade was thrown into the trench because that fits with the situation and makes sense. The long sentence with three clauses stretches out the action, rather like slow motion in a film.
- Check places where you could add depth to your writing.

My dad used to say the battery was the devil’s forge where sinners made horseshoes for nightmares.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Writers can use words in different ways for special effects.

It was wonderfully strange. For the first while, people sort of tiptoed around town and spoke in whispers, as though the silence was made of very fragile glass.

- *Metaphor: compares two different things by saying one is the other.*
- *Oxymoron: puts two unlike or contradictory words or ideas together*

We’d sit there with our hearts ready to pop out of our mouths.

- *Simile: compares two things by saying one is like the other.*

Invite one or more students to share a sample of their writing. Workshop the sample to identify where the writing could be improved by using an evocative or descriptive figure of speech.

- What effect do you want the writing to have here?
- You say she felt excited. What could you compare that with? Was it a terrible feeling or a great feeling? How can you help your audience understand exactly how she was feeling?
- How can you add drama or interest?

Try out several options, inviting others to contribute ideas and give feedback. If necessary, provide models from the text to demonstrate a range of figures of speech.

PROMPT the students to review their own and each other’s work to add (or remove) words that make the text richer and more precise.

My mate Don Curry ...

I swear to God ...

Me, it felt like ...

I dare say ...

“I lied to yer, Billy.”

TONE

Tone is the emotion or perspective an author wishes to convey, achieved through the use of vocabulary and/or phrasing.

EXPLAIN that authors develop a “tone” in their writing. For example, the tone might be impersonal, emotional, comic, and so on. From the tone, readers are able to gauge the author’s attitude towards the subject. Authors achieve this by using words and phrases that result in a tone. In pairs, have the students identify the tone of the text.

- Look at your writing. What is the tone of the piece? How could you change it or improve it?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- Your choice of using fiction will help you meet your purpose because you know your audience prefers fiction. How could you encourage them to also read non-fiction?
- The language you’ve used will help your readers visualise the powerful feelings of your main character, and this will support them to understand why she made those choices.

METACOGNITION

- What helped you to clarify your purpose and define your audience? How can you be sure your work will suit your audience?
- How have you used “show, don’t tell”? Have you given enough clues to help your audience make inferences about what happened?
- How have you used figurative or colloquial language to give your writing depth, precision, and interest? Have you used this language correctly? How do you know? How is this done in other languages you know? Are any colloquial or figurative expressions similar in another language? What is different?

 Writing standard: by the end of year 8

 The Literacy Learning Progressions