



Overview

Maia, who does not want to practise for the kapa haka festival, is given an opportunity to reveal her artistic strengths. She learns that she can make a valuable contribution to the team in her own way.

This narrative:

- includes themes of contributing and finding your strengths

- shows how your attitudes can change when you contribute in a way that uses your strengths
- provides opportunities to make and justify inferences and to evaluate the thoughts and actions of the characters.

Texts related by theme **“Kapa Haka Festival”** SJ 1.2.09 | **“Making the Team”** SJ 1.2.11

Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

But if it is boring, why did you join...
“All my friends are in kapa haka – and my cousins,”
I told him. “I want to go to the festival with them.”
“It’s not fair to the others if you’re not trying your best,”
Mr Hayward said. He held up my ruined poi. “Miss Taiapa
is making new poi for the festival. I would like you to help
her every lunchtime instead of kapa haka practice, OK?”
“OK.”

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

I had another...
“He aha?” said Miss Taiapa.
“Grocery bags – the ones at the supermarket. They’re
different colours. We could ask everyone to bring in red and
blue supermarket bags. Then we can make poi covers out
of those.”
Miss Taiapa didn’t waste any time. When the bell rang that
afternoon, everyone in school had a notice to take home.
By lunchtime the next day, we had plenty of blue and red
grocery bags.

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

“They can’t be too tight,” I said, “or they’ll fly off.”
“Not too loose either,” said Miss Taiapa, “or they fly around
everywhere.”
I held the foam ball while Miss Taiapa tied it to the end of
a plaited taura. She stretched a blue grocery bag over the
foam and pulled tight. I wound sticky tape around and around
the base. Miss Taiapa let me trim the extra plastic with her
sharpest scissors.
There it was. The best-looking poi I’d ever seen. I spun it up
over my shoulder, down off my leg, and caught it back in front
of me. Perfect.
“You’re very good with that poi. Maybe you should have
stayed in kapa haka.”
“No, I don’t think so,” I said. “I like doing this better.”

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

Poi

by Tira Johnson

I didn’t like my poi. It was lopsided.
The taura was loose, and one of the
hukahuka had fallen off. When I found
a little hole in the plastic, I stuck my
finger in and wiggled it. Some foam came

some words or phrases that are ambiguous or unfamiliar to the students, the meaning of which is supported by the context or clarified by photographs, illustrations, diagrams, and/or written explanations

Possible curriculum contexts

SOCIAL SCIENCES (Social Studies)

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

ENGLISH (Reading)

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

ENGLISH (Writing)

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

Possible reading purposes

- To enjoy reading a story about a girl who discovers what she is really good at
- To think about how and why Maia's attitude changed
- To explore the way the writer conveys Maia's feelings and behaviour.

Possible writing purposes

- To explain your favourite activity and why you enjoy it
- To describe a time when you felt unhappy or bored and what happened to make this change
- To share a special skill, strength, or interest with others.



The New Zealand Curriculum

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “lopsided”, “plucked”, “stern”, “Misbehaving”, “festival”, “heaps”, “pastels”, “googly eyes”, “untangling”, “four-plait”, “scrunched”, “shone”
- Colloquial and idiomatic words and phrases: “Whatever”, “didn't waste any time”.
- The use of te reo Māori words and terms, some of which are glossed or shown in the illustrations
- Te reo Māori words and terms that are not glossed, including:
 - taura – cord
 - hukahuka – tassel
 - Haere atu! – Go away!
 - tino pai – very good
 - He aha? – What?
 - hōhā – nuisance
 - kaitiaki – guardian

Possible supporting strategies

Some of these suggestions may be more useful before reading, but they can be used at any time in response to students' needs.

- Make sure you are clear about the pronunciation and meanings of the te reo Māori before sharing the story. Seek support from students, staff, or community members if necessary.
- Make a list of words and phrases that may be challenging for some students. You could give pairs of students two or three vocabulary items. Have them find out their meanings, construct a sentence with each item, and explain their item and their sentence to another pair. Provide resources for the students (including simple dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, and visual prompts) and support them to find meanings and write example sentences. Display all of the vocabulary items, explanations, and example sentences for students to refer to.
- Discuss the terms used for the poi construction, using the illustrations and glossary. If possible, have some poi so the students can identify the parts with their correct names.
- *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46 has useful information about learning vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- Experience of being in an activity you don't enjoy
- Experience of discovering a skill or interest you enjoy and taking pride in it
- Experience of kapa haka, in particular, experience of poi
- Experience of making something with your hands, such as plaiting and craft activities
- Experience of recycling materials for another purpose.

Possible supporting strategies

- Ask the students to share with a partner their experiences of being in an activity they did not enjoy, for example, a sports or cultural activity. *What did you feel like? What did you do? What did you want to do?*
- Next ask them to share what it feels like to do something they enjoy. Ask them how their behaviour changes when they're happy.
- If students have little or no experience of Māori culture or performing arts, ask classmates to describe kapa haka. You may need to support this with video or books.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- First-person narrative with a school setting
- Story told in chronological order
- Use of a row of asterisks to show the passage of time
- Description of making the poi
- The change in the character over the story
- Use of unattributed dialogue
- Use of te reo Māori in conversations
- Description of the process of making poi.

Possible supporting strategies

- Remind the students of similar, first-person narratives they know. Review the features, such as the order of events and the time markers, the use of dialogue, and the plot structure.
- Support the students to identify the setting and the characters and their relationships. Prompt them to name the characters in the illustrations as they learn their names or roles.
- The students may need support to follow the steps for making poi: have the materials on hand and use the illustrations and the words to help the students understand what Maia does. Seek help from others in the school or community if necessary. For a clear demonstration by students from Melville Intermediate School go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKJDJxerVI>
- Support the students who struggle to identify the speakers in the dialogue and to understand the time frames in the story. You could work with them to write names alongside each line of dialogue and link them to the illustrations. You could also make a timeline of events together.
- Co-construct or support the students to create a timeline consisting of the main events and, if appropriate, the associated verb phrases and signal words.
- Although many of the sentences are not long, there is a wide variety of sentence types, with different relationships between ideas in the sentences. Support the students by breaking the sentences into phrases and clauses, identifying Who? What? Where? When? How? and/or Why? and the relationships between each phrase or clause. Pay particular attention to words that signal the relationships between ideas (for example, “when”, “until”, “if”, “instead of”). Even if students understand the vocabulary and grammar of a sentence, they can become lost if they do not understand the relationships between different parts of the sentence.



Sounds and words

Instructional focus – Reading

Social Sciences (Social Studies, level 2: Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people's customs, traditions, and values.)

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

First reading

Before reading “Poi”, ask the students to think, pair, and share what they know about poi and kapa haka. As they share, record and display key vocabulary, using te reo Māori where possible. Ask students to share their experiences in kapa haka with the wider group. As the students share, use the discussion to introduce and explain key concepts and vocabulary.

- Support the students to identify the characters as they read, listing them and discussing the relationships between them.
- Prompt the students to make connections between what Maia is doing, feeling, thinking, and saying and times when they have had similar thoughts or feelings.
- Ask questions to help the students find information about what changes for Maia, for example: *What changes did you notice in her behaviour or attitude? Why do you think she changed?*

If the students struggle with this text

- Remind them to use the context (including the illustrations) to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words. You may need to quickly model this. Provide support or ask the students to support each other if some of them are unfamiliar with te reo Māori.
- Remind them to pause and think about what they already know, for example: *What does the art room at our school look like? How do you feel about doing art?*
- Support the students to record notes on a chart to clarify the sequence of events. They can discuss what Maia was thinking, feeling, and doing at each stage in the story.

Subsequent readings

The teacher

Ask the students to discuss what they learn about Maia in the opening paragraphs.

- Make a character map of Maia, using what you learn or infer from page 2.
- Find the words that tell you this. How much did you work out by thinking about yourselves or people you know?
- Why did she wish the word “Whatever” hadn't left her mouth? Has that ever happened to you?
- What does this tell you about the kind of person Maia is?

The teacher

Direct the students to focus on the paragraph in the middle of page 4 (“I really didn't mind ...”)

- How does the writer let you know that Maia is happier here?
- Which words or phrases show this?
- Why might she be happier? What could this tell you about her skills and strengths?

The teacher

Support the students to unpack the way the writer shows Maia's changed feelings at the end of the story.

- With your partner, find words that show Maia was pleased with her work.
- Now find words that show she was sorry for her earlier behaviour.
- Which words and actions show how Mrs Waru appreciated her work?
- In your own words, explain the role Maia has found in kapa haka.
- What message or big idea has the writer left you with? How do you feel about her message?

The students:

- reread and discuss what they learned about Maia on page 2
- use the words, the illustrations, and their own experiences and feelings to infer that Maia is not happy
- identify that Maia regretted her rude response to Mrs Waru, and infer that Maia is not usually mean or impolite to teachers
- ask questions about her behaviour and make predictions about what may happen next.

The students:

- use words in the text and their own experiences of doing art to infer that the art room is a place where Maia feels happier
- identify the use of positive words and phrases, for example, “the best room”, “full of cool stuff”, and the list of materials as evidence that Maia loves using these things
- think more deeply about why the art room is a happy place for Maia and make inferences, for example, she feels free there, and she is good at art so it's a place where she can show her skills.

The students:

- identify the use of descriptive similes (“like waves”, “like fire”) and infer that Maia is pleased with the dramatic effect of the colours she chose
- make connections between Maia's words at the start of the story and her apology with times when they have felt like this to evaluate the change Maia has gone through
- think critically about the writer's message – for example, they agree that the writer wanted her readers to understand that people can contribute in different ways. They apply the message to their own experiences and acknowledge that most people are happy when they are doing something they are good at.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- Some of you know a lot about kapa haka and about making poi. Thank you for sharing your knowledge. It helped us to understand how important kapa haka is and what a lot of work goes into preparing for festivals and competitions.
- I noticed how you shared your own experiences of being hōhā when you had to do something you didn't feel you could do. That's exactly how Maia felt. You explained what a big difference it makes when you can do things you're good at.
- You gave a lot of thought to why the author wrote this story. That's a good way to deepen your understanding – and to think about the messages or ideas you want to write about yourself.

METACOGNITION

- How did you work out what “didn't waste any time” meant? What strategy did you use?
- Did you find parts of the text hard to understand? What did you do then? What else could you do?

Instructional focus – Writing

Social Sciences (Social Studies, level 2: Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people's customs, traditions, and values.)

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

Text excerpts from “Poi”

I didn't like my poi. It was lopsided. The taura was loose, and the hukahuka had fallen off. When I found a little hole in the plastic, I stuck my finger in and wiggled it.

Examples of text characteristics

SHOW, DON'T TELL

Showing what a character is doing often tells more about them than explaining what the character is thinking or feeling.

Teacher

(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Explain the differences between “showing” and “telling”.

- What ideas does the writer want you to understand?
- Was this an effective way to engage you?
- In your own writing, how can you show your readers important ideas or information without telling them every detail?
- Find a place you can review and revise in this way. Ask a partner to check your work before and after: Did your revision improve the writing?

Miss Taiapa frowned.
“We'll need sixty-five poi.”
“Sixty-five? That's heaps!”
I cried.
“There are ten girls in each row and three rows.”
“That's thirty,” I reminded her.
“And they need two poi each so that's ...”
I sighed. “Sixty.”
“And we'll make five spares just in case some get lost.”
“That's going to take forever,”
I complained.

DIALOGUE

Dialogue enables a writer to show characters and their thoughts quickly. It can also help readers to feel something in common with a character. This helps readers make connections and build expectations of the story.

Model how you unpack the writer's use of dialogue.

- The writer has put each person's words on a new line. She indicated the speakers of the first two pieces of dialogue, so I know who said those lines. I know that speakers usually take turns, and there are only two people talking, so she doesn't need to name the speaker for every line.
- Next, I think about what the writer expects us to infer. The verbs “cried” and “complained” show how Maia felt about the task. Her words show that she is not happy. The teacher's words show she is staying calm and determined. It's a great way to show readers the differences between the two characters.

Direct the students to review their own use of dialogue.

- Will readers know who's talking?
- Will the dialogue give readers clues about the characters' feelings or motivations?
- How can you use dialogue to help your readers make their own connections? What do your characters know or feel that your readers will also know or feel?

I held the foam ball while Miss Taiapa tied it to the end of a plaited taura. She stretched a blue grocery bag over the foam and pulled tight. I wound sticky tape around and around the base. Miss Taiapa let me trim the extra plastic with her sharpest scissors.

EXPLAINING A PROCESS

Accurate verbs, nouns, and adjectives help readers to know what is happening. The correct order of the actions helps them follow the process, step by step.

Ask questions to help the students refine their writing and meet their audience's needs.

- How have you made sure your audience will understand what your characters are doing?
- Do you need to give them more help, for example, by explaining the steps in a process or by describing what they are using?
- Is the order of the explanation clear? Check by thinking “First, second, third ...” as you reread your work. Do you need to make any changes?
- Support the students with using signal words and structure to clarify the stages in a process. To begin to use these in their writing, English language learners will need:
 - meaningful and contextualised examples and explanations
 - opportunities to co-construct further examples
 - opportunities for carefully scaffolded practice (for example, cloze sentences, matching and sequencing activities)
 - feedback on their use of the language.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- Your revisions have made your writing much more interesting. Instead of telling me everything about ... , you've shown what he did. That meant I could use my own experiences and my imagination to understand him better.
- In this part, you've used dialogue that shows me how these characters felt about each other. The words you gave them and the verbs you used showed their differences clearly.

METACOGNITION

- When you're revising your draft, what questions are you asking yourself? How do these questions help you revise? (For example, by asking “Would someone who has never made a poi understand this?”)
- Tell me about why you structured your writing in this way. How does the structure help to convey your ideas?

 **Writing standard: by the end of year 4**

 **The Literacy Learning Progressions**