



Overview

This contemporary story is about a boy and his love of planes, but students will also read about the importance of his name and how a chance meeting helped him gain confidence. Samoan students will identify with Lagi, and all students will enjoy his enthusiasm and excitement as he sets off on his first trip to Sāmoa.

This narrative:

- recounts a “rite of passage” journey that many will relate to
- provides opportunities to infer meaning
- includes a number of Samoan names and words
- has a theme of personal growth and confidence.

Texts related by theme | “Mata i Pusi” SJ L4 May 2015 | “King Street Bridge” SJ L4 Oct 2013

Text characteristics from the year 5 reading standard

TUTAI
by Sisilia Eteuati

... Alex called. “I heard going to Sāmoa these days. That true?”

Everyone had a nickname. It was Hobbit. Lucas was Puke-us. And Tigi’ilagi was Stinky, despite the fact he had rounded out on his first day.

But Alex (who was Bean) had latched on to the first part of his name. “Ting-y? Sing-y? Sting-y ... Stinky!” Bean had collapsed laughing. “Definitely Stinky!” The name had stuck.

Lagi shrugged at Bean’s question, even though he was excited. It was his grandmother’s sixtieth birthday, and Lagi’s parents had decided he was old enough to travel by himself to represent their family. “You’re her oldest grandchild, her pele,” Lagi’s father had said. “There could be no better gift.”

some ideas and information that are conveyed indirectly and require students to infer by drawing on several related pieces of information in the text

“Yeah, it’s all right,” he said to the others. “I’m going on a 737.”

Knowing the kind of plane was important. It was like knowing about cars, only better. Lagi’s dad was awesome with cars. He’d just bought one, real cheap, and Lagi had helped fix it up. His dad was really happy after they’d resold it. “High-five,” he said as the man drove off. “We’ve just made enough money to pay for your ticket to Apia.”

Lagi looked for plane books in the library and searched the Internet. “The wing flaps cause lift,” he told the other kids at lunchtime.

plane starts to climb.” For once they were all fascinated. Even Puke-us and Robert Hobbit, who were pretending non-interesting on the edge of the circle. Even Bean.

“There’s also the thrust levers. It’s automatic,” Lagi continued. “The autopilot selects the proper setting, the pilot pulls back the control wheel, and then the plane lifts off.”

“How come you know a lot about this?” Bean challenged.

“I saw it on TV,” Lagi said. He knew enough not to ask the other kids at lunchtime.

some information that is irrelevant to the identified purpose for reading (that is, some competing information), which students need to identify and reject as they integrate pieces of information in order to answer questions

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Lagi felt proud to be given this job – but at school, he kept his cool.

a significant amount of vocabulary that is unfamiliar to the students (including academic and content-specific words and phrases), which is generally explained in the text by words or illustrations

He watched the plane get smaller – with a strange feeling in the bottom of his belly – until they were nothing more than tiny models.

Then Lagi heard a voice over the intercom. “Talofa lava. This is captain Manu Ioane, with first class service.”

A smile erupted across his face. “He said it was the perfect name for a pilot.” The boys all looked impressed.

“Tigi-i-lagi!” he said, the slow vowels as delicious as a mango.

figurative and/or ambiguous language that the context helps the students to understand

Possible curriculum contexts

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Level 3 – Relationships with Other People: Identity, sensitivity, and respect.

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 3 – Structure: Show a developing understanding of text structures.

Level 3 – Purposes and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 3 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.

Level 3 – Purposes and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how to shape texts for different purposes and audiences.

Possible reading purposes

- To enjoy a story about a boy who loves planes
- To find out how a boy gains confidence through his name and culture
- To analyse and evaluate the writer's use of structure in a narrative
- To identify the author's purpose.

Possible writing purposes

- To describe a first-time flight or other journey
- To write a story using a similar narrative structure
- To write about something of special interest.



Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “latched on to”, “resolved”, “fascinated”, “non-interest”, “challenged”, “welled up”, “clutched”, “VIPs”, “intricate”, “muscular”, “mechanical”, “gold customers”, “distracted”, “impressed”
- Technical words related to aircraft and flying: “Wing flaps”, “lift”, “deploy”, “retract”, “thrust lever”, “autopilot”, “control wheel”, “security gates”, “cockpit”, “onboard checks”, “boarding pass”, “air bridge”, “gauges”, “aeroplanes”, “momentum”
- The Samoan names and their meanings, including the double meaning of Lagi's name
- The plays on names to make nicknames
- Samoan words that are not translated but are explained in the context: “pele” (beloved), “taulima” (tattoo), “tautai” (navigators), “va'alele” (flying boat)
- Samoan words not translated: “Sole” (Boy), “uso” (brother), “Tālofa lava” (Greetings), which need to be inferred from the context
- Colloquial expressions, including “latched onto”, “kept his cool”, “real cheap”
- Metaphors and similes, including “welled up”, “seemed to shiver in his hand”, “Eagle eyes”, “like his heartbeat”, “the glow in his chest”, “a smile erupted”, “as delicious as a mango”
- Use of elision (where words or parts of words are missed out), for example, “Heard you're going to Sāmoa these holidays. That true?”

Possible supporting strategies

- Identify any words or phrases that may be unfamiliar to students and plan ways to teach this vocabulary before, during, or after reading. *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.
- Create word maps to explore the vocabulary associated with air travel and words of Samoan origin.
- Ask students to mime or draw pictures to illustrate the meaning of the words.
- Check, and if necessary demonstrate, the correct pronunciation of the Samoan names and words. You may be able to ask students or adults in the school community for support. Create a list of Samoan names and other Samoan words, adding English, Māori, or other language equivalents according to your students' knowledge.
- If students need support to understand colloquial language and elision, provide opportunities to encounter them orally before reading. Ask students who know other languages to make connections with how colloquial or figurative language works in those languages.
- See also [ESOL Online, Vocabulary](#), for examples of other strategies to support students with vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- Experience or knowledge of air travel
- Some knowledge of the controls that make a plane fly
- Some knowledge of Samoan names, places, and culture
- The meaning of the gesture “tapped the side of her nose”
- Experience of nicknames and the ways they can be formed and used
- Experience of the ways people can tease each other and the importance to some people of being “cool”
- Understanding the significance of gold stripes on a uniform
- Knowledge that many people's names have a special meaning or significance.

Possible supporting strategies

- Before reading, ask students to share their experiences of flying. *Where did you fly to? What do you remember of the boarding procedures? How did it feel as the plane took off? How much do you know about how a plane works?*
- Show a video of a pilot flying a plane, or allow students to use an online flight simulator.
- Students share some gestures that they know and discuss what they mean in English.
- Share the meaning of their own name with a partner or in small groups.
- Ask students to share their experiences of using or giving nicknames. Discuss the good and not-so-good aspects of nicknames.
- Be aware that some students may have experienced teasing, bullying, or being ignored by schoolmates. They may volunteer information but be sensitive to the silences or bravado that might mask painful personal connections.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- Straightforward narrative, with a clear structure over two settings
- The use of detail to show a character's thoughts and emotions
- The use of dialogue and colloquial language
- The use of gagana Sāmoa
- The inference that the Samoan captain gives Lagi a renewed sense of pride in his name and identity
- The significance of the final simile.

Possible supporting strategies

- Review the standard features of a narrative, including characters, settings, and a chronological plot with a beginning, middle, and end.
- For some students, a story map or template may help them to keep track of the story during or after reading.
- After reading, return to and discuss any parts of the story that might have been challenging for any students.
- Some students could benefit from using the illustrations to prompt an oral retelling of the story in pairs or small groups.



Instructional focus – Reading

Health and Physical Education (Level 3 – Relationships with Other People: Identity, sensitivity, and respect.)

English (Level 3 – Purposes and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.)

Level 3 – Structure: Show a developing understanding of text structures.)

First reading

- Support the students to make connections to the characters and situation, noting these mentally or on paper.
- Prompt them to use their connections to understand the boys' interaction in the first section. *What do we learn about Lagi in this part? What connections of your own helped you understand the way the boys talk to each other?*
- Prompt them to use their connections as they read about Lagi's flight.
- Draw their attention to the last sentence. *What do you think it means? How does it relate to the rest of the story?*

If the students struggle with this text

- Ask questions to help them identify parts of the story they found confusing and to make connections and inferences that will help them clarify meaning. *Why does Lagi lie about going to the library? Have you ever had to do something like that? What does that tell you about his relationship with the other boys? Why is Lagi surprised when he sees the captain? How does his conversation with the captain make him feel about himself?*
- Remind them to use a range of strategies when they lose meaning, for example, rereading or reading on and using word knowledge and knowledge of sentence structure.
- If students struggle with the flow of the story, support them to create a diagram to show each "scene" and to recount what happened in each one. Select a [reading strategy](#) such as a skills flow or text reconstruction to support English language learners.

Subsequent readings

The teacher

Ask questions to help students understand the setting and Lagi's thinking.

- *What is Lagi thinking while he is sitting with his mates?*
- *Why are cars mentioned?*
- *Why might some of his mates be "pretending non-interest"?*
- *What did you infer about the kind of person Lagi was from the information in the first two pages?*

To support students who find this difficult, you could have them work in small groups to act this scene or to dramatise incidents from their own experience of acting "cool".

The teacher

Prompt the students to ask and answer questions about the captain and his conversation with Lagi to understand Lagi's response to him.

Remind students to use the details in a text to visualise the events or feelings being described.

Again, students could work in small groups to act this scene from the story.

The teacher

Support the students to identify and understand the use of figurative language by discussing examples with a partner.

- *What similes or metaphors has the writer used to describe Lagi's feelings when the plane is taking off?*
- *Tell your partner how she does this, and what impact it has.*
- *Why does she use a mango simile at the end? What is the impact of choosing a mango here?*
- *What message or theme does the writer want you to understand from this story? What was her purpose? How do you know? What aspects of the structure of the story support this purpose?*

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You realised that you could work out the untranslated words because, when you reread, you found that they were usually explained in the same sentence. It's a good idea to reread when you come across a word or phrase you don't understand because you often notice things you hadn't seen the first time.*
- *I noticed you and your partner didn't agree about the writer's message to start with, but the reasons you shared helped you see each other's point of view.*

METACOGNITION

- You said that seeing the Samoan captain was a turning point for Lagi. How does understanding how narratives are structured help you identify the turning point of the story? Where else did understanding the structure help you follow the events?
- What strategies helped you with this story? Tell me about a place where you had to consciously use a strategy to work out what was happening.

The students:

- reread and identify the parts that show what Lagi is thinking
- draw on their own experiences to make connections that help them understand his mates' attitudes
- identify the brief flashback that takes place in Lagi's mind as he recalls being told he was to go to Sāmoa
- integrate information across the text and their own understandings of behaviour to make inferences about Lagi, for example, his love of planes and his family, his admiration of his dad's knowledge of cars, and his need to "keep his cool" at school.

The students:

- identify the details that show what is special about the captain for Lagi
- use what they know about figurative language to understand the way the captain interprets Lagi's name
- visualise Lagi's feelings by using details and drawing on their own experiences.

The students:

- identify examples of figurative language and explain them to their partners
- share their interpretations of the final simile, giving their reasons
- evaluate the impact of the simile and integrate this with what they have learned about Lagi to form and justify an opinion about the writer's purpose
- suggest other similes that the author could have used.



Reading standard: by the end of year 5



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

Health and Physical Education (Level 3 – Relationships with Other People: Identity, sensitivity, and respect.)

English (Level 3 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.)

Level 3 – Purposes and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how to shape texts for different purposes and audiences.)

Text excerpts from “Tautai”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

“Stinky,” Alex called. “I heard you’re going to Sāmoa these holidays. That true?”

Everyone had a nickname. Robert was Hobbit. Lucas was Puke-us. And Tigi’ilagi was Stinky, despite the fact he had rounded out the vowels slowly on his first day.

ENGAGING THE READER

Writers use a variety of techniques to engage their readers. One is to start with dialogue that will introduce characters quickly. The dialogue can be used to set the scene for a story.

Ask questions as the students prepare to write.

- How will you grab your readers’ attention right from the start?
- What information about the scene do you want them to find out about as they start to read?
- How can you use the opening lines to set up the plot or the theme?
- What do you want your readers to wonder, predict, or infer?

Prompt students to review their opening lines. Have them work in pairs to give each other feedback on the impact of their openings. You may need to model how to ensure that opening sentences engage the reader without overdoing description or figurative language.

Lagi shrugged at Bean’s question, even though he was excited. It was his grandmother’s sixtieth birthday, and Lagi’s parents had decided he was old enough to travel by himself to represent their family. “You’re her oldest grandchild, her pele,” Lagi’s father had said. “There could be no better gift.”

ADDING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sometimes writers help readers to understand what a character is thinking or feeling by inserting background information. It’s like a small flashback or aside before we return to the story.

Model the way you analyse the extract.

- So far we know that Lagi is at school, talking with his friends. At the start of the story, Alex asks Lagi a question. Then the writer told us about the nicknames before she mentioned the question again. Even then, she didn’t show Lagi answering it directly. She gave us background information about the trip and how Lagi feels about being chosen for it. This information tells us something important about Lagi.

Prompt students to review the way they give information to their readers.

- Are there any places where some background information will help your readers?
- How much more do they need to know?
- Work with a partner to decide if the information you add is helpful, or if you’ve given too much detail.
- How will you know when you’ve got it right?

A smile erupted across his face. “He said it was a perfect name for a pilot.” The boys all looked impressed.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Writers can convey a strong feeling or idea by using figurative language, such as similes and metaphors.

“Tigi-’i-lagi!” he said, the slow vowels as delicious as a mango.

Prompt the students to experiment with figurative language.

- How could you describe the feelings behind a very happy smile? What similes or metaphors capture those feelings?
- How can you use different senses to give a strong feeling? For example, in this extract, the writer uses the taste of a mango to help us understand the sound of Lagi’s name when he says it slowly and proudly.
- Try several examples to describe the same thing. Which one gives the strongest feeling?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- I read your first sentence, and I knew right away I was in for an exciting story. The opening lines grabbed my attention.
- You tried several different ways to add information here: why did you decide to add this piece?
- Comparing the hero’s look to that of an angry lion works well. It shows his power and the scariness of his anger.

METACOGNITION

- What factors (such as purpose and audience) affect your decisions about how to structure your writing?
- Tell me about the decision-making process you went through before you started writing.

Writing standard: by the end of year 5

The Literacy Learning Progressions