

A New Home for Mokomoko

by Vanessa Hatley-Owen

JUNIOR JOURNAL 43
This text is levelled at Gold 1.



OVERVIEW

When a class from Westmere School find out that mokomoko (skinks) are a protected species, they decide to build a mokomoko refuge. This recount describes the process and provides information about mokomoko and their survival needs. It provides opportunities for students to practise identifying and summarising main points, about both the process and mokomoko.

This text has strong cross-curricular links, particularly to science and technology, and can be read and reread for several purposes. "Mustelids", another text in this Journal, also has the theme of protection of native wildlife.

There is an audio version of the text on the *Junior Journal 42 and 43* CD.

RELATED TEXTS

Texts about protecting native creatures: "Our Treasure Island" (JJ 37); "Mustelids" (JJ 43); "A Safe Home for Snails" (CN 1 2005)

Procedural texts with strong links to technology: *Scarecrows from Space* (RTR, Purple); "Make a Mini Worm Farm" (JJ 39); "Our Recycled Worm Farm" (JJ 40)

TEXT CHARACTERISTICS

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes with a solid outline. Other boxes indicate additional characteristics.

Ideas and information organised in paragraphs

Shifts in time, signalled by indicators of time
"Then", "After a few days", "now", "First"

"Then we needed to find out if there were any predators in the area," explained Felix.
"We got some ink tracks to find out what was living in or moving through the area where we wanted mokomoko to make their new home."
After a few days, the students checked the ink tracks. Good news! There were no rat tracks, no cat tracks, and no hedgehog tracks.



An ink track is a small plastic tunnel that has a piece of card with ink on its floor. You put food inside the tunnel and place it in the bush. Animals living in the area would find the food, walk through the ink, and leave their footprints behind.

A mix of explicit and implicit content within text and photographs that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge to make simple inferences, for example, about:

- why mokomoko need to be moved away when new roads and houses are built
- the reason for the location and features of the refuge
- the meanings of some subject-specific words and some Māori words, including the sign on page 23
- why the refuge was not "a place to play in"

They could...
teachers a...
make are...
lots of hid...

They found a huge pile of sticks and they used them to make a wall where mokomoko could sunbathe. They made tunnels from ponga logs, wire, and plastic piping.

The tunnels would give mokomoko a safe way to move around their new home. "Ponga logs are perfect for mokomoko," said Sela. "Insects like living in the logs, and mokomoko like eating the insects."

Inclusion of dialogue in the form of explanations from the students



Sela showing a tunnel that was made for the mokomoko

Content that is likely to be unfamiliar to some students (the concept of protecting native species, the focus on a creature that many students may have never seen, the work of the Department of Conservation)

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences.

Visual language features such as a text box, footnotes, bold print for key words, and labelled photographs that are clearly explained and linked to the body text

The setting in a bush area within the school grounds, which may be an unfamiliar concept to some students

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, the meaning of which is supported by the context or illustrations

English (Reading)

Level 2 – Structure: Show some understanding of text structures

Science (Living World)

Levels 1 and 2 – Life processes: Recognise that all living things have certain requirements to stay alive.

Technology (Technological Practice)

Level 2 – Planning for practice:

Develop a plan that identifies the key stages and the resources required to complete an outcome.

Brief development:

Explain the outcome they are developing and describe the attributes it should have, taking account of the need or opportunity and the resources available.

Key competency – Participating and contributing

SUGGESTED READING PURPOSES

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

- To find out what the students did to make a new home for mokomoko
- To find out what mokomoko need and identify why the refuge was a suitable home for them.

SETTING A LEARNING GOAL

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

Some behaviours you could expect to see as the students read in order to meet the reading purpose are suggested below. **Select and adapt** from them to set your specific learning goal(s). Be guided by your students’ particular needs and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

Students can

- make connections between their prior knowledge and information in the text in order to identify and summarise main points about how the students built the refuge
- identify information about suitable habitats for mokomoko and compare this with the features of the refuge (evaluate)
- use word-solving strategies to decode and/or work out the meanings of unfamiliar words and phrases.

TEXT AND LANGUAGE FEATURES**VOCABULARY**

- Some unfamiliar words and phrase (including some Māori words and phrases): “pitched in”, “mokomoko”, “refuge”, “variety”, “ink tracks”, “plastic tunnel”, “bask”, “ponga logs”, “plastic piping”, “Department of Conservation”

POSSIBLE SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Explore some of the key vocabulary of the text, for example, by constructing word webs around the theme of protection (safe place, refuge, protected, conservation).

Monitor students’ **decoding** attempts by noticing their use of words from the text during discussion. Prompt the students to remember strategies they can use, for example:

- breaking words into syllables or familiar chunks or components (“pro-tect-ed”, “sur-vive”, “hab-it-at”, “pred-a-tors”, “foot-prints”)
- drawing on knowledge of spelling patterns and phonics (“bask” (like “ask”))
- awareness of macrons to indicate long (drawn-out) vowels in Māori words (“Ngā”, “Māori”, tī kōuka”)
- reread the phrase or sentence around the target word to confirm decoding attempts.

Monitor the students’ **word-solving** strategies to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases. Prompt students to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- think of the overall context and make connections to their own experiences (“pitched in”)
- notice when the word is used again in the text and review their initial understanding (“protected”, “refuge”, “habitat”)
- reread or read on so that they can use the next word or the rest of the sentence to clarify the context (for example, that “like” is being used as a verb on page 21 rather than a term of comparison, and “placed” is being used as a verb on page 25 when “place” has been used as a noun previously)
- notice words in bold print and look for definitions or explanations close by
- make connections between the text and visual language features (“ink tracks”).

Have a dictionary available to confirm or clarify word meanings.

You may need to discuss the concept of a Māori bilingual class.

Make connections to any relevant texts the group has read before or to science topics about native animals and their habitats.


SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

- Possible unfamiliar scientific concepts such as suitable habitats and protected species

INTRODUCING THE TEXT


- Tell the students you have a text for them to read about a New Zealand native creature they may have never seen. Show the students the photograph on page 18 and encourage them to share any experiences they have of mokomoko (skinks), geckos, or lizards, including traditional stories. Explain that mokomoko are native to New Zealand and need to be protected. If necessary, explain that native means found only in New Zealand. Prompt the students to make connections to their prior knowledge of protected native species, such as kiwi or other native birds. Refer to “Mustelids” if they have read it.
- Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s). The suggestions are based on a first reading that focuses on the process of building the refuge and a second reading that probes more deeply into why the students built it as they did.

METACOGNITION


Effective readers are metacognitive. They are aware of the processes and strategies they draw on and are able to explain how they used these to successfully make meaning and think critically. Examples of metacognitive behaviours, or strategies that promote metacognitive behaviours, are threaded through the notes and indicated by .

EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOURS

(what to look for, prompt, and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal)

 As they read or reread this text, students notice when meaning has broken down. They draw on a range of strategies to correct the problem and can explain what they did.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO READ, RESPOND, AND THINK CRITICALLY

 Ask questions: *How did you know that bit was wrong? Or I noticed that you reread that bit when you got confused. How did rereading help you?*

 Use prompts: *How did you know that bit was right? Think about the strategy you used. How did it help you?*

 Give feedback: *I noticed that you read this as... and then you fixed it up by ...*

READING AND DISCUSSING THE TEXT

THE FIRST READING:

The students make connections to their prior knowledge and between sections of the text, including the visual language features, to identify and summarise the main points about how the Westmere students built the refuge.

EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOURS

(what to look for, prompt, and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal)

PAGE 18

The students identify the people mentioned and what their roles are.

The students make connections between the words in bold print and their definitions or explanations.

They visualise what could happen to mokomoko if they weren't moved to a safer place.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO READ, RESPOND, AND THINK CRITICALLY

If necessary, model the pronunciation of the Māori words (the audio version provides support) and tell them the school name if necessary. *Who was involved in the project at the beginning? What did they do?*

Prompt the students to think about the usual purpose of parentheses or bold print in a non-fiction text.

Explain that a protected creature is one that may be in danger of dying out so is protected by special laws. *I'm wondering what would happen if the mokomoko weren't moved ...*

PAGE 19

With support, the students make connections between pieces of information on pages 18 and 19 to build their understanding of "refuge" and "habitat".

The students use the punctuation (the dash to link ideas in the first sentence, the parentheses for "bask"), (the bold print for key words, the footnote, and the photograph and caption) to support meaning.

The students identify and summarise the main points about the process used to create the refuge.

Encourage the students to share their ideas about what a refuge is. What words are helping you think about what "refuge" means?

Explain the link between the word "natural" in the footnote and "nature". Model the use of "habitat" as part of the ongoing discussion. Encourage the students to share their ideas about what it might look like.

Start a chart to track what the Westmere students did. Model how to create short summary statements. These can be in note form or sentences, for example:

- listened to scientist
- decided to build a refuge
- found information about habitats
- chose a suitable area.

For students who need support with identifying main ideas and details, review typical paragraph structure. Together, identify the main idea and supporting detail for the first paragraph on page 19. Ask the students to identify the main ideas for the second and third paragraphs.

PAGES 20–21

The students notice the use of speech marks to indicate comments from two of the Westmere students.

They make connections between the body text, the photograph, and the explanation in the text box to visualise how an ink track works.

They recognise that, on page 21 ("They could now start work"), the project has moved on from gathering information and finding a suitable site to building.

Prompt the students to confirm who is speaking. Who's talking here?

Direct the students to think, pair, and share about how the ink tracks work and why they are important. If students are having difficulty with the concept, you could use a cardboard cylinder and strip of cardboard to demonstrate what it would look like.

I'm noticing that the students carefully select things to build the habitat. What things did they choose, and why did they choose them?

Ask the students to create summary statements to add to the tracking chart.

Direct them to highlight anywhere "then" is used to signal an action to guide their understanding of the sequence of events – which also helps them to identify the main ideas.

PAGES 22–23

The students make connections between the idea of native trees and that of native animals.

They make connections to the idea of predators (page 19) and ink tracks (page 20) to visualise what could happen if the cats didn't wear bells.

The students make connections between the photograph of the sign and the first paragraph on page 23 to infer what the sign means in English.

They notice DoC and the role they have in this project.

The students summarise the main steps in the process on these pages and update the tracking chart. They share their opinions, using evidence in the text, as to whether the refuge is likely to be suitable.

Confirm that the term “native” applies to any living thing. Remind the students that a “habitat” is a natural home and for native creatures like mokomoko, a natural home is one that has native trees and plants.

Support students to identify why cats are a danger to mokomoko. *What other ideas in this text are helping you to think about what could happen?*

Model your thinking: I wonder what this sign means ...

Explain that DoC is an abbreviated name and that “conservation” means “saving” – so DoC people work to save protected and endangered animals and plants.

If appropriate, prompt the students to make connections to their own experiences of a technology project.

Refer to your chart and review the process the Westmere students have used so far (having an idea, getting information, making preparations, building). Have the students share their ideas about whether the students in the text have used a good process. *If DoC didn't think it wasn't a suitable habitat, what might happen?*

Remind the students about how they identified time signals on the previous pages in order to help them sequence the text. If necessary prompt, them to look for the “At last” and “Finally”.

PAGES 24–25

The students notice the time shift and infer that the process of checking is serious and takes a long time.

They make connections to their knowledge of tikanga, particularly in relation to welcomes. They use context to work out the word “waiata”, which may not be familiar in its written form.

With support, the students make connections to what they have learnt about mokomoko, plus the information on page 25, to infer why groups rather than the whole class released each mokomoko.

The students infer that the mokomoko like their new home and are going to be safe.

Prompt the students to think critically: *Why did they need to get the refuge checked by DoC?*

If necessary, model how the students could decode (“wai-a-ta”) and prompt them to reread the word before “waiata” (“sang”). Have the students share their experiences of similar ceremonies.

Prompt the students to make connections to relevant information. *How would the mokomoko feel if there were too many people?*

Ask questions: *Did the students do a good job? How do you know? How did the experts help them?*

- 🔍 With support, the students reflect on their learning. They revisit the reading purpose and learning goals and explain how they identified the steps in the process.
- 🔍 The students identify some challenges in the text and how they worked (or tried to work) them out.

- Revisit the reading purpose and learning goal.
- 🔍 Ask questions: *What helped you to find information about what they did?* (For example, the text structure, indicators of time, verbs to describe their actions, and visual language features to help clarify meanings.)
 - 🔍 *Was there anything that you found difficult or confusing?* If necessary, model or explain some strategies they could use.

THE POSSIBLE SECOND READING:

The students identify information about suitable habitats for mokomoko and compare this with the features of the refuge.

EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOURS

(what to prompt, support, and look for as the students work towards achieving their learning goal)

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS THROUGH DELIBERATE ACTS OF TEACHING

PAGE 18

The students look for the key words “mokomoko” and “need” to help them identify sections of text that have the information they need.

Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s). Explain to the students that they need to locate information about what mokomoko need and what the students in the text needed to do. Tell them to look for the key words “need” and “needed” to help them locate specific information. Set up a chart with two columns. A possible example of a completed chart is shown below.

| What mokomoko need for their habitat to be suitable | What the students needed to do to ensure the habitat would be suitable |
|---|---|
| Page 19 – have places to lie in the sun (bask) | Page 21 – made a brick wall for sunbathing |
| – insects and berries | Page 21 – used ponga logs for tunnels because insects like living in the logs |
| | Page 22 – planted plants that produce berries |
| | Page 22 – put tī kōuka leaves on the ground to attract insects |
| – have places to hide from predators | Page 21 – made tunnels from ponga logs, wire, and plastic piping |
| Page 20 – be safe from predators | Page 20 – used ink tracks to check there were no rats, cats, or hedgehogs |
| | Page 22 – asked the neighbours to put bells on their cats |
| Page 22 – need shelter | Page 22 – planted more native trees and plants |
| Page 23 – be safe from people | Page 23 – made a sign to remind people that the refuge was not a play area |

EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOURS

(what to prompt, support, and look for as the students work towards achieving their learning goal)

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS THROUGH DELIBERATE ACTS OF TEACHING

PAGE 18 CONTINUED

The students revisit the headings and questions regularly and participate in organising the information on the chart.

To support with identifying key words, work through the process together. Read the first heading on the chart.

Model how to locate information. Use an enlarged photocopy of pages 18 and 19 and think aloud: *This page (18) is about the scientist and about mokomoko being protected, but that's not what I'm looking for ... On the next page, I can see the word "need" – so now I'll look more closely and read the whole sentence ... Use a pen some highlight relevant information.*

Tell the students to read pages 18–19 looking for the key words. Fill in the first column in the chart together.

Prompt the students to refer to the headings on the chart as they read to keep their purpose for reading clear in their heads.

You could have the students work in pairs to highlight information on photocopies of the text.

Stop at the end of every second page to review information and record the students' summaries on the chart.

The students can explain why the refuge was suitable.

Prompt the students to think critically: *Now that we have learnt about suitable habitats for mokomoko, tell me why it's important to move them when new roads or houses are built.*

They think critically about the impact on mokomoko habitats of building new roads or houses.

- With support, the students reflect on their learning. They revisit the reading purpose and learning goal and they explain some of the strategies they used, for example, summarised information.
- The students identify some challenges in the text and how they worked (or tried to work) them out.

Revisit the reading purpose and learning goal.

- Ask questions: *What helped you to identify the information you were looking for? What connections did you make between pieces of information? – Was there anything that you found difficult or confusing? If necessary, model or explain some strategies they could use.*

AFTER READING

- Students can reread the article as they listen to the audio version on the *Junior Journal 42 and 43* CD. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Have students summarise the text using the information from the chart and adding time phrases.
- Read and discuss other texts with themes of conservation and/or protected species.
- Have the students find out more about mokomoko and/or the Department of Conservation.
- Explore some of the key vocabulary of the text, for example, by constructing word webs around the theme of protection (safe place, refuge, protected, conservation). Create a glossary for some of the subject-specific vocabulary.
- Read traditional stories about mokomoko and other lizards and discuss their significance to Māori and other cultures.
- Invite local iwi to talk about the significance of mokomoko to them.