



Overview

What does it mean to be Māori? In this first-person narrative, Eddie's classmates expect him to be familiar with a pōwhiri because he is Māori. But that's not how Eddie feels, and an upcoming visit to a local kura fills him with anxiety. The support of a sensitive teacher, an encouraging mother, and a wise kaumatua enable Eddie to express his culture in a beautiful painting. When his class visits the kura, he takes his place on the paepae with pride.

The story shows that there are many ways of expressing the customs, traditions, and values of a culture and that words are not the only way to express them.

Texts related by theme

“Heartbeats in the Dark” SJ 2.4.05 | “The Tapu Tree” SJ 3.2.09

Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

other visual language features that support the ideas and information, for example, text boxes or maps



Over the week, we find out more about the kura. We learn about how the kura is set up. It has some things we don't have in our school, like a whareniui and a waharoa. Koro Tu also tells us about some of the artwork we will see and what it means.

We have a go at doing some of the designs ourselves, and Miss Marshall pins up our artwork all over the walls. I decide to paint a picture of the waharoa at the kura we are going to. I find a photo on the Internet and paint it onto one of Mum's big canvases. I fill the sky with colourful koru. I'm pleased with it, and Mum says the painting is special.

I take it to school the next day, but when it's my turn to hold it up and talk about it, I freeze. I can't speak. I am so nervous. Miss Marshall says the painting is amazing, but I think she is just trying to make me feel better.

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

That afternoon, Miss Marshall talks to Koro Tu by her desk. They're looking at me.

"Right class, listening please," Miss Marshall finally calls. We all sit facing her and Koro Tu.

"Tēnā koutou," says Koro Tu. "Good to see you all today."

I try to smile, but my face is frozen again.

"I've talked to Miss Marshall, and we have decided who will place the koha during the whaikōrero."

He holds his tokotoko in both hands.

"It was a difficult choice. But two people stood out for this important task. We have chosen Sa'a and ..."

I'm sweating. I can't look.

"... Manase," he says.

I let out a deep sigh and open my eyes.

The boys hongī Koro Tu, and the class clap loudly for them.

I'm so glad I wasn't picked.



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

figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, or personification

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 a story about a boy with a problem at school and to find out how his problem is resolved
- To learn about one boy's way of expressing his cultural knowledge and identity.

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

Possible writing purposes

- To communicate ideas about your own cultural identity
- To share information about a culture and its traditions
- To experiment with character development in fiction writing.

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

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY:

- Possible unfamiliar word and phrases, including “chatter”, “the sāsā”, “brainstorm”
- The words in te reo, some of which appear in the glossary
- The metaphors: “my face start to burn”, “I freeze”, “I have a lump in my throat”, “gather up my courage”
- The simile: “wrinkled like a brown leaf”.

Possible supporting strategies

Spend time familiarising yourself with the Māori words and provide support for pronunciation.

Point out the glossary and demonstrate how to use it. Before reading, support your students with any unfamiliar words. Prepare a vocabulary list of key words. For each word, include a simple definition in English and/or a picture and an example sentence. Give pairs of students all the words and the example sentences and have them match the words to the correct definitions.

The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction, pages 39–46, has some useful information about learning vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Familiarity with school life, including preparing for a visit
- Knowledge of the differences and similarities between a kura and a mainstream school
- Knowledge of tikanga surrounding a pōwhiri
- Knowledge of the sāsā and its place in the culture of Sāmoa
- Experience of feeling uncomfortable with others' expectations
- An understanding of the different ways that cultural customs, traditions, and values can be expressed.

Possible supporting strategies

Review the students' knowledge of the cultural concepts in this story. Activate their background knowledge, helping them make connections between their experiences and those of the children in the story.

Explain that the sāsā is a well-known dance from Sāmoa, also known as the slap dance.

Keep in mind that, like Eddie, some students may be unaware of their knowledge or may be uncomfortable sharing their knowledge.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- Narrative fiction, told in the first person and in a present time frame (for immediacy and dramatic effect)
- The setting in a present day New Zealand classroom
- The use of dialogue, mostly attributed
- The mostly chronological order and clear indications of shifts through time: “Next month”, “The next day”, “The following week”, “Over the week”, “That afternoon”
- The use of past, present, and future verb forms
- The final scene on the day of the visit
- The glossary
- The supportive illustrations
- The use of an ellipsis to build suspense.

Possible supporting strategies

Remind students of the features of different narratives. Bring their focus to the first-person narration, and discuss what makes it different from third-person narratives. Highlight the use of “I”. Prompt the students to notice the use of a present time frame and its purpose – to make the story seem like it's happening now and, in this case, to help the reader identify with Eddie.

It may help some students to have a timeline for the story, starting with Miss Marshall's announcement and ending with the pōwhiri. Support students to place events on the timeline, using the words that show the passing of time.

Use a graphic organiser to support students to identify Eddie's feelings and track the way they change. You could have the students create a table with columns for the page number, Eddie's feelings, how you know he's feeling that way, and why he's feeling that way. (Note that students may need to use their own knowledge to think critically about why Eddie feels the way he does. At points, it is left fairly open.)

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.)

Text excerpts from “Ask Eddie”

She asks us who has been part of a pōwhiri before. Nobody puts a hand up.

“Not even you, Eddie?” asks Sa’a.

“No,” I mumble.

“But you’re Māori, right?” he says.

I nod.

Manase is sitting next to me. “It’s OK,” he whispers. “I’m from Sāmoa, and I haven’t even done the sāsāl!”

Students (what they might do)

The students understand that the “I” refers to Eddie. They link this with the “we” and “us” to confirm that Eddie is the narrator. They make connections between their knowledge of pōwhiri and the text to infer that the children have not had much exposure to Māori culture. They ask questions about Eddie and his behaviour. They infer that he doesn’t know how to, or doesn’t feel comfortable with, explaining his experiences. They infer that Manase is trying to make Eddie feel better by revealing his own lack of cultural experience.

We have a go at doing some designs ourselves, and Miss Marshall pins up our artwork all over the walls.

I decide to paint a picture of the waharoa at the kura we are going to. I find a photo on the Internet and paint it onto one of Mum’s big canvases. I fill the sky with colourful koru. I’m pleased with it, and Mum says the painting is special.

The students make connections with their own use of idiom to infer that “have a go” means they try to copy the designs. They use information in the second sentence to infer that Eddie does his painting at home and that his mother is a painter. They find evidence to support their inference that Eddie is a good painter. They ask questions about Eddie and infer that he feels more comfortable painting than talking.

The students predict that Eddie’s painting is going to help him feel more comfortable about the pōwhiri.

He holds his tokotoko in both hands. “It was a difficult choice. But two people stood out for this important task. We have chosen Sa ‘a and ...”

I’m sweating. I can’t look. “Manase,” he says.

I let out a deep sigh and open my eyes. The boys hongi Koro, and the class clap loudly for them. I’m so glad I wasn’t picked.

The students infer that Miss Marshall has asked Koro not to choose Eddie because she knows he doesn’t want to be singled out. The students make connections between the text and their own experiences to infer how badly Eddie does not want to be picked. They ask questions about why he feels this way, and infer that perhaps he is shy or does not want to talk about his life on the marae.

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

EXPLAIN (if necessary) that in a first-person narrative, the writer tells a story through the voice of a main character: in this story, it’s Eddie. Point to the use of “we” and “us” as further indicators that the narrator is one of the children in the class.

PROMPT the students to identify the present time frame. Explain that this is a device used to make the story seem like it’s happening as we read it.

ASK QUESTIONS to support the students to understand the boys’ behaviours.

- Why do you think Sa’a says, “Not even you?”
- Why didn’t Eddie put his hand up?
- Why do you think Manase said what he did? What was his purpose?
- Have you ever felt you couldn’t put your hand up for something even though people expected you to? Tell us about that.
- What do you think will happen next? What clues did you use?

Introduce the graphic organiser to record Eddie’s feelings. With the students, fill it in for page 3. Then have them fill it in as they read.

DIRECT the students to reread this paragraph with a partner, making and sharing inferences. Give prompts if necessary.

ASK QUESTIONS

- What does the expression “have a go” suggest? What do you think their art work will be like?
- Do you think Eddie did his painting at school? Why do you think that?
- Why might his mother have big canvases? What does this tell you about Eddie and his ability as an artist?
- We’ve seen Eddie as shy and unconfident. How does he seem now? Why might he feel like this? What might happen next? What clues suggest this?

DIRECT the students to retell this episode with a partner.

- Take turns to retell this section from the point of view of Sa’a or Manase. How do they feel? Now pretend you are the teacher and Koro Tu. What might they say to each other before deciding which children to choose? Why do you think this?

ASK the students to share any similar experiences.

- Have you ever felt like Eddie? Tell us about it.
- How did you use your own experiences to help understand the text?
- Why is Eddie so reluctant to speak out or be chosen to help in the pōwhiri? Is he just shy, or are there other reasons? What evidence do you have?

PROMPT the students to review their predictions.

- We’ve learnt a lot about Eddie, and about the teacher and Koro. How do you think the story will end? What evidence helped you predict this?
- Why do you think the story is called “Ask Eddie”? Is it a good title?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- I noticed you reviewed your predictions and changed them after Eddie did his painting. Making predictions and checking them as you read on is a good strategy to make sure you really understand the text.

METACOGNITION

- What strategies did you use to monitor your reading? Which helped you the most?
- How did your personal connections and experiences help you to understand how Eddie felt at different points in the story?

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

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 “Ask Eddie”

“Next month, we’ll be visiting the kura on the other side of town,” says Miss Marshall. The class is excited, and the room fills with noise and chatter. Miss Marshall waits for quiet.

Then she says that because we are visiting the kura for the first time, there will be a ...

The following week, we talk about what will happen when ...

“We’ll have our kaumatua with us,” says Miss Marshall. “His name is Koro Tu.”

When Koro Tu comes to visit in the afternoon ...

“I’ve talked with Miss Marshall, and we have decided who will place the koha ... both hands.

“No,” I mumble.

Everyone looks at me, and I can feel my face start to burn ... I keep my mouth shut.

“Tēnā koutou,” he says, and smiles. He has a wise face, wrinkled like a brown leaf. He looks friendly.

... when it’s my turn to ... I freeze. I can’t speak – I am so nervous.

I’m sweating, I can’t look.

My heart is pounding. I have a lump in my throat, ... to gather up my courage to speak.

And I join in, even though I can’t sing.

Examples of text characteristics

JUMPING RIGHT IN

The first paragraph can give readers a lot of information very quickly. It can let readers know about the setting and the characters straight away. It may also give clues about the plot or events to come.

TIME MARKERS

Writers help their readers keep track of the passage of time and the sequence of events by using time markers.

Verb forms

Writers also use the verbs to show they are writing in the past, the present, or the future. Sometimes two or more verb forms are in the same sentence, especially if direct speech is being used.

SIMILE

A simile describes by saying one thing (or person) is like something else. A simile helps the reader to form a picture in their head of the thing or person being described.

DESCRIBING CHARACTERS

Characters (and the changes they go through) can be shown in many ways:

- *describing how they speak*
- *describing what they do*
- *describing their thoughts*
- *describing their reactions.*

METACOGNITION

- How did your planning help when you started the first draft? Is this a strategy you would recommend to others? Why?
- Why did you use the first person? What effect did you want to have on your readers?
- You started writing in the past tense, and then you changed and wrote in the present tense. Tell me what you were thinking when you made this decision.

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

ASK QUESTIONS to help the students form intentions for writing.

- How do you decide on the ideas you’ll write about? What is the main message you want to communicate?
- Are you writing from your own experience or do you need to seek information from others?
- How will you tell your story? Will you use the first person (“I”, “We”, “Us”) or third person (“She”, “He”, “They”)? Why?
- How are you outlining the story? For example, will you use a story map or a graphic organiser to plan the characters, setting, plot, and theme?

ASK the students to review the passage of time in their writing.

- How will you help your readers to know when time passes?
- Use texts like this to find good examples of the words and phrases that will help your readers keep track of events.

MODEL unpacking extracts from “Ask Eddie” to show the changes in verb forms.

- The story is written as if it is happening right now. The verbs are mainly in present forms, but when Miss Marshall tells them about the visit, she uses future forms because from that point in the story the visit is in the future: “we’ll be visiting”, and “We will need”. Later, Koro uses a verb form that shows that an action has been completed: “I’ve talked”, and “we have decided”.

TELL the students to review the way they have used verb forms and time markers. You could use timelines to help them clarify the meanings of verb forms and check that they are correct. Model placing the main events on the timeline and adding examples of the time markers and verb forms. Explore the meaning and form of the main verbs. (Some students, especially English language learners, may benefit from creating a verb table that lists the verb forms, the meanings of each, the form of each, and examples. Students could add to the table as they encounter new forms and/or new examples.)

ASK the students to select and share some of their descriptions of characters.

- What did you want your readers to know about this character?
- Why did you describe them that way? Can anyone suggest another way to describe them?
- As well as describing the physical appearance, how can you show the character’s feeling and motivation?

EXPLAIN that in a narrative, characters often change because of the events.

- Writers show their readers how a character changes. They can do this by showing how a person speaks, what the person is thinking, how the person acts, or how they interact with other characters. For example, a person who “mumbles” at the start of a story might be talking confidently at the end.
- Look at examples in “Ask Eddie” and other narratives, then review your writing to see if you could give your readers more help to see how a person changes in the story. Share your writing with a partner and tell them about the changes you’ve made.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- Thank you for sharing your writing. It’s helpful to stop and check as you write, and we learn from each other when you share.

 Writing standard: by the end of year 4

 The Literacy Learning Progressions