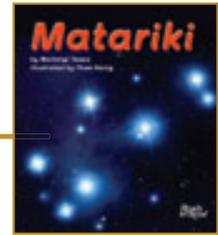


# Matariki

by Waitangi Teepa  
illustrated by Thaw Naing



This text is levelled at Gold 2.

## Overview

This report first explains some of the stories and beliefs associated with Matariki, the Māori New Year, especially its links to the stars. It then describes some of the ways that Matariki is celebrated.

The text provides rich opportunities for students to learn about and share their own experiences and knowledge of Matariki and other new year celebrations.

There is an audio version of the text on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2010*.

## Related texts

- Texts about Matariki to share with your students: “Lanterns for Matariki” (SJ 1.3.05), “Matariki”, “Tane me Te Whānau Marama” (both SJ 2.2.03)
- Stories about the night sky: *Māui and the Sun* (RTR, Purple), “The Story of Rona”, “Night is a Blanket” (both in *Night is a Blanket*, RTR, Gold)
- Texts about other new year celebrations, for example, *Diwali* (RTR, Purple).

## Cross-curriculum links

Social sciences (level 2) – Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people’s customs, traditions, and values.

## Text characteristics

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

A context (Matariki) that may be unfamiliar to some students

The information about Matariki in the text and illustrations and the need for students to make connections between ideas, for example,

- between the past and the present
- between the reappearance of Matariki in the sky and the celebration of the new year
- the different ways the term “Matariki” is used (as the name for the Māori new year, a group of stars, and the biggest star)

Several time shifts, for example,

- the information about the Matariki stars disappearing, then reappearing
- the references to the distant past (“the old stories”, “the old days”, “in the past”)

The structure of the text as a report, with an introduction, a series of main points, and a conclusion

Main ideas (that Matariki is a time for celebration, for remembering the past, and for starting afresh)

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences

Ideas organised in paragraphs

Have you ever looked up at the night sky and gazed at the stars? You might have seen a group of seven stars called Matariki.  
Matariki is also the name for the Māori New Year. You can see the stars of Matariki for most of the year, but they disappear from the night sky in Aotearoa in late April. The stars appear again in winter in late May or early June.  
When the stars appear again, and the new moon has risen, it is the beginning of the Māori New Year and there is much to celebrate.

The use of the second person (addressing the reader as “you”) and first person plural (“us”, “We”) to form a connection with the reader

Some words with multiple meanings, for example, some words that can be verbs or nouns, according to context (“plant”, “fish”)



The poetic style of some of the language, particularly the repeated phrases “It is a time for” or “It is a time to”

The prefix in “disappear”

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, the meaning of which is supported by the context or illustrations, for example, “Matariki”, “Māori New Year”, “disappear”, “Aotearoa”, “late April”, “late May”, “early June”, “risen”, “celebrate”, “Seven Sisters”, “eldest”, “crops”, “gather”, “family stories”, “kaimoana”, “weave”, “carve”, “forgive and forget”, “problems of the past”, “future”

## Suggested reading purpose

- To find out and share ideas about Matariki and talk about the connections to our own lives

## 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?)*

To meet the reading purpose, students need to draw on a range of comprehension and processing strategies, often simultaneously. The strategies, knowledge, and skills below link to *The Literacy Learning Progressions*. Select and adapt from them to set your specific learning goal. Be guided by your students’ particular needs and experiences: who they are, where they come from, and what they bring (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

This text provides opportunities for students to:

- make connections between sections of the text and to their own knowledge and experiences
- summarise main points
- use word-solving strategies to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words and phrases.

## Introducing the text

- Discuss why celebrations are important in all cultures. Discuss celebrations around “time”, changing seasons, and those that occur for other reasons.
- Ask the students to share what they know about the celebration of Matariki. Depending on the extent of their prior knowledge, you could use the illustrations on the cover, pages 4–5, and/or pages 6–7 as prompts. The illustrations clearly convey the idea of a link between the stars in the sky and the celebration of Matariki.
- Encourage the students to also make connections to what they know about other new year celebrations, for example, Chinese New Year or Diwali. If possible, provide opportunities for English language learners who share the same first language to talk together and then share their ideas with the group.
- Share the reading purpose and learning goal. Explain that there is some complicated information in this text but that summarising the main points will help them understand the connections between the ideas.

## Reading the text

Below are some behaviours you could expect to see as the students read and discuss this text. Each example is accompanied by instructional strategies to scaffold their learning. Select and

adapt from the suggestions according to your students’ needs and experiences.

### The students identify and summarise main points.

### The students make connections between sections of the text and to their own knowledge and experiences of new year celebrations.

- These behaviours support each other so the teaching suggestions for both are combined here.
- Remind the students of the idea of a link between the stars and the celebration of Matariki (from the introductory discussion). *Page 2 will tell you about this link.* Have the students read the first three paragraphs, and together summarise the main point: that “Matariki”, as well as referring to the new year, also refers to a group of stars.
- Have the students read the rest of page 2 to find out more about the Matariki stars. Allow plenty of time to discuss and clarify the two main points here: that the stars disappear for a short time, and that when they reappear, it marks the beginning of the new year celebration. Note that this implies a further point: that the celebration of Matariki, like a number of other new year celebrations, lasts for more than one day.
- If necessary, prompt the students to make connections to what they know about the moon (its changing appearance) to support them with understanding the concept of the moon rising. Explain that “risen” is the past-tense form of “rise”.
- To help the students clarify the connections between the information in the text, set up a chart with three columns (such as the example below) or a Venn diagram. Together, summarise the main points so far under the most appropriate heading.
- Have the students read page 4 and think, pair, and share about the main points. Discuss the purpose of the heading on this page. Draw out the idea that the information on this page is like a “text box”, providing more detail about the stars. *Where on our chart do these points belong?*
- Ask the students to read page 5. Discuss the new idea – the long-held belief (from the “old stories”) about the link between the stars and plentiful food. Draw out the idea that this main point applies to both the stars and the concept of the new year – because, in the old stories, the stars signal what the new year will be like. Add these new points to the chart.

- Before reading on, have the students read the only heading on page 6 and briefly explore the layout and illustrations on pages 6 and 7. *What connections have you noticed with the previous page?* The students can refer to page 5 or to the summary chart to notice that several of the illustrations on pages 6 and 7 refer to stories and food. Draw out the idea that these pictures are a bit like a time shift to the present day, showing some ways that Matariki is celebrated.
- Have the students read pages 6–8. Together, summarise the information to add to the chart.
- Review the chart together to clarify and discuss the links between the information in the text. The students could add any other ideas that have arisen as a result of reading the text (for example, the idea of Matariki lasting more than one day).

### Matariki – main points

About the Matariki group of stars	Connections (about both)	About Māori New Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a group of seven stars</li> <li>– disappear and then come back</li> <li>– also called the Seven Sisters (and other names)</li> <li>– biggest star also called Matariki (guides her younger sisters).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Māori New Year starts when the stars reappear</li> <li>– Matariki happens in winter</li> <li>– old stories and beliefs about these stars (when they shine brightly, it will be a good year for growing and gathering food)</li> <li>– both have been around for a very long time</li> </ul>	ways of celebrating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– sharing family stories and stories about the past</li> <li>– learning about the land and how to look after it</li> <li>– gathering seafood</li> <li>– learning how to make things</li> <li>– enjoying being with family and friends</li> <li>– saying goodbye to old problems</li> <li>– making new plans</li> </ul>

- Encourage the students to make connections to their own experiences of celebrating the new year. For example, they could share other experiences of Matariki that are not mentioned in this text, or they could talk with a partner about something they do that is the same and one thing they do that is different in the way they celebrate the new year. To support your students, especially English language learners, you could use a speaking frame to show a way they can talk about similarities and differences. Model a sentence that describes a similarity or difference, for example, *For new year my family has a party but at Matariki people go fishing.* Then write your sentence into a speaking frame like the one below. Take out the optional parts of the sentence and have the students create their own sentences.

For new year my family _____	and	at Matariki people _____
For new year my family _____	but	at Matariki people _____

- Revisit the learning goal and support the students to track how they met it. *How did summarising help you to make connections to information in the text?*

### The students use word-solving strategies, including knowledge of syntax, to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words.

- Prompt students to break up multi-syllabic words into recognisable chunks or syllables, for example, “dis-ap-pear”, “A-o-te-a-ro-a”, “ce-le-brate”. You can model this on a whiteboard. Using context, they are likely to work out the words after the first few syllables.
- Encourage the students to use context and the contrast with “early” (as in “early June”) to work out the meaning of “late April” and “late May”. If necessary, explain that it means “near the end of” the month (and prompt the students to work out what “early June” would mean).
- On page 5, prompt the students to use the illustration and context (the idea of warm weather, and the words “growing” and “Plants”) to help with the meaning of “crops”.
- For students who may not be familiar with the term “kaimoana” on page 7, the word “seafood” on page 5 is a useful clue.

## After reading

- The students can reread the text while listening to the audio version on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2010*.
- Focus on the information about celebrating Matariki and create a comparison chart using the students' knowledge of other new year celebrations.
- Have students work in groups to explain and describe a celebration from their culture. If appropriate, have students who share a first language work together so that they can generate ideas and discuss in their own language first.
- You could read or reread retellings of Māori legends, such as the Ready to Read versions of *Māui and the Sun* and "The Story of Rona", where the sun and moon respectively are personified (like the Matariki stars). Discuss the importance of the natural world in these "old stories". In *Māui and the Sun*, there is a particularly strong link to the idea of the influence of the natural world (the sun) on people's ability to gather and grow food.
- Have the students share with a partner any words or phrases they found difficult and the strategies they used to work them out. Listen to the discussions. Do you need to follow up on any decoding strategies, particular words, or features of words?
- Explore some features of word structure, for example, the meaning of the prefix "dis" in the word "disappear". Together, generate (or use the dictionary to find) other examples, such as "disagree", "disapprove", "disconnect", "dishonest", "dislike", "disrespect".
- Explore the "ing" added onto the verbs after "for" on pages 6–7. Explain that you can add on the "ing" to talk about activities, for example, "sharing", "making". This is particularly useful for English language learners.