



Overview

This poem describes a kākano (a seed) as taonga and explains what makes it special. “Kākano” is inspired by the Māori proverb: Ahakoa he iti, he pounamu – although small, it is precious. The poem includes te reo Māori words and phrases that are supported by context, illustrations, sentence structure, and a glossary. This poem provides opportunities for students who are familiar with te reo Māori to share their knowledge.

This text requires students to “confidently use a range of processing and comprehension strategies to make meaning from and think critically about” text (from *The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 14).

Kākano is one of three texts in this journal (including the article “Seeds” and the story “I Spy”) that are about seeds, providing opportunities for students to explore ideas and information from different perspectives.

There is a PDF of the text and an audio version as an MP3 file at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Related texts

Texts about taonga and other treasures: *A Quilt for Kiri, Treasure from the Sea* (Ready to Read, Purple); *A Gift for Aunty Ngā* (Ready to Read, Gold); “Kahu Ora” (JJ 47); “Rongoā Māori” (JJ 49); “Te Taonga Nui a Tāne” (SJ, Part 1 Number 1, 2011)

Poems about the natural world: “Patterns” in *Splish Splash!* (shared); “Dandelions” (JJ 27); “Spider Work” (JJ 42); “Thunder” (JJ 44); “Uira” (JJ 45); “Tūi” (JJ 49)

Texts about plants or seeds: “Pōhutukawa” (JJ 45); “Rongoā Māori” and “Helpful Trees and Plants” (JJ 48); “Seeds” and “I Spy” (JJ 50)

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.

A mix of explicit and implicit content within text and illustrations that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge in order to make inferences, for example, why the author thinks a seed is taonga

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, the meaning of which is supported by the sentence structure, illustrations, and a glossary, including descriptive vocabulary and subject-specific vocabulary, some of which is in te reo Māori

Kākano

I am small,
but within me
I hold great taonga,
waiting to be shared.

All I need is wai, hihī rā,
onemata, and wā.
Then my taonga is free,
and I begin to grow.

I am kai.
I am hāora.
I am tipu ora.
Green and precious life!

Kelly Joseph

Glossary

hāora oxygen	kākano seed	tipu ora budding life
hihī rā the sun's rays	onemata fertile soil	wā time
kai food	taonga treasure	wai water

Author's note

This poem was inspired by the Māori proverb:
Ahakoa he iti, he pounamu – although small, it is precious.

The unfamiliar context of a seed “talking” (personification)

Visual language features, such as the author’s note and the glossary

The structure of the text as a free verse poem with three verses of four lines, which includes a variety of sentence structures

Possible curriculum contexts

English (Reading)

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

Level 2 – Structure: Show some understanding of text structures.

Social Sciences

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

Science (Living World)

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

Reading purposes and learning goals

Select from and adapt the suggestions below according to your students' strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*The New Zealand Reading and Writing Standards for years 1–8*, Knowledge of the Learner, page 6).

Possible reading purposes

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

- To think about the author's ideas about kākano (the seed)

Possible learning goals

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

- The students **make connections** between the information in the poem and their prior knowledge to **visualise** what the author is describing.
- They **make connections** between the descriptions of the seeds and the ideas about taonga to **make inferences** about the main ideas in the poem.
- They **identify and discuss** the author's purpose for writing.
- They use **word-solving strategies** to work out the meaning of the Māori vocabulary and phrases, for example, using the glossary and illustrations, rereading, and saying the words aloud.



The New Zealand Curriculum



The Literacy Learning Progressions

Text and language features

Vocabulary

- Te reo Māori vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to the students in either their spoken or written form: “hāora”, “hihi rā”, “kai”, “kākano”, “onemata”, “taonga”, “tipu ora”, “wā”, “wai”
- The use of macrons to denote long vowels in te reo Māori.

Possible supporting strategies

(These suggestions may be used before, during, or after reading in response to students' needs.)

Readers are able to use strategies for working out unfamiliar words only when they know most of the vocabulary in a text. For students who need support with vocabulary, introduce and practise selected items before reading. [See ESOL Online: Vocabulary](#) for suggestions.

To provide support for **pronunciation**:

- have the students listen to the audio version
- model pronunciation of the words, and encourage the students to say the words aloud
- explain the use of the macron
- read the poem aloud to link pronunciation and phrasing
- have students do a choral reading of the poem, in which everyone reads at the same time.

Prompt the students to remember the strategies they can use when working out **word meanings**, for example:

- using the context of the phrase, line, and surrounding verse
- using the illustrations, the unfolding meaning of the poem, and their prior knowledge
- using the glossary
- reading on to look for further information.

Have a dictionary available for the students to use to confirm or clarify word meanings, but remind the students that they can make a best attempt at a word's meaning and come back to it later. Have bilingual dictionaries available, where appropriate.

Specific knowledge

- Knowledge of seeds
- Knowledge of taonga.

Ensure the students have read and discussed the article “Seeds” to build or extend their understanding.

Have the students share what they know about taonga and personal items or family items they consider treasures. You could make a link to the Ready to Read books *Treasure from the Sea*, *A Quilt for Kiri*, and *A Gift for Auntie Ngā*.



Sounds and Words

Metacognition

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO BE METACOGNITIVE

Here are some ways you can build students' awareness of the processes and strategies they are using as they make meaning and think critically.

- *How did reading aloud help you understand the poem?*
- *I noticed you looking at the illustration as you read the poem by yourself. How was that helping you?*

Introducing the text

- Before introducing the text, familiarise yourself with any Māori vocabulary that is new to you. You can listen to this on the audio version.
- Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that your introduction to the text is effective in activating their prior knowledge. You could have them read the article “Seeds” in this journal beforehand.
- Tell the students that they are going to read a poem that includes some te reo Māori. Draw their attention to the glossary and confirm that it will clarify the meaning of te reo Māori words.
- Read the title and have the students use the glossary to clarify the meaning. Briefly discuss what the students know about seeds (what happens to them, what they need to grow).
- Discuss the illustration and what they notice happening with the plant. You could draw their attention to the pātaka (traditional storehouses) or leave this for a later discussion.
- Share the purpose for reading.
- Read the poem aloud to support students with the meaning, the vocabulary, and phrasing.
- Follow your reading by asking the students to read the poem themselves (see below). Remind them that not all poems rhyme, and some rely on how they are read (phrasing) to support the meaning.

Reading and discussing the text

Suggestions for ways that you can support the students to achieve the learning goals are listed in the right-hand column of the table below. **Select from and adapt** the suggestions according to your students’ needs.

Student behaviours

Examples of what to look for and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Much of the processing that students do at this level is “inside their heads” and may not be obvious until after they have read the text and you are discussing it as a group.

Deliberate acts of teaching

Examples of how you can support students as they work towards achieving their learning goal(s). This may involve individual students rather than the whole group.

Reading the poem

- The students read the poem several times, using the punctuation to help with phrasing.
- They use the information to visualise what the author is describing, referring to the glossary when they are not sure of word meanings.
- They make inferences about the author’s ideas, discussing their inferences with a partner and rereading to check information. For example:
 - they infer from the title, the use of “I”, and the idea of something small that the author is writing the poem from the viewpoint of the seed
 - they draw on their prior knowledge about seeds to make a connection between the idea of “taonga” and the seed growing
 - they identify some ideas in the poem about how plants help people and why seeds are treasures.
- Prompt the students to notice the punctuation, in particular, the commas to support phrasing. If necessary, reassure them about the run-on lines.
- Ask the students to use the information in the poem to build a picture in their minds. Prompt them to use the illustrations and the glossary.
- Model your thinking about word solving to provide support for “budding life”: *I can see the word “bud” inside “budding”. I know that on a plant, a bud opens up and grows into a flower.*
- Listen in to their reading and discussions, providing support as necessary. For example, prompt the students to think about:
 - who is narrating the poem
 - what they already know about how seeds start to grow
 - why the author thinks that seeds are important.

Discussing the poem (You can return to this discussion over a number of sessions.)

- The students share their inferences about the ideas in the poem. For example:

Some ideas the poem has given us	Why we think this
Things are not always what they seem to be when you first look at them.	A seed is small and doesn’t look like a taonga, but it grows into something big and special.
Seeds are special.	A seed grows into something special. Plants are living things. They are green and precious.
The seed can only be a taonga if it gets the things it needs.	A seed needs water, sun, soil, and time to grow.
Seeds help people.	Seeds grow into plants that give us oxygen. Some plants give us food.

- Remind the students of the reading purpose. Ask them to share what they think the author is telling them.
- If necessary, prompt them to notice that the second verse is about what the seed needs and the third verse is about what the seed gives.
- They can also refer to the information in the article “Seeds” in this journal to check their ideas.

- The students read the author’s note and infer that the word “inspired” means that there is a link between the proverb and the poem. They compare the message of the proverb with the message in the poem, noticing words like “small”, “taonga”, and “precious”.
- They make connections to their experience of precious family items to clarify their understanding of “taonga”. They discuss the idea of the seed as taonga using evidence from the poem.

Taonga / Treasures	What makes it precious?
kākano	We get: - food when the seed grows - oxygen to help us breathe - trees to build houses and give us some shade in the summer - beautiful plants.

- Draw their attention to the author’s note. If necessary, explain that a proverb or whakataukī is a wise saying from long ago. Support the students to notice the connection between the whakataukī and the poem: *What is small and precious in the poem?*
- Encourage the students to think critically about the idea of the seed as taonga: *What is special about the kākano?* You could record their ideas to help clarify their understanding.
- Prompt the students to think critically about the link between the seed and the illustration of pātaka: *What part of the poem best matches this illustration?*

Supporting metacognition

With support, the students reflect on their learning. They revisit the reading purpose and learning goal(s).

- The students explain how they made a connection with their prior knowledge of seeds to help them recognise the list of needs.
- The students identify a challenge in the poem and explain how they solved it, for example, through repeated readings.

Remind the students of the reading purpose and learning goal(s).

- *What helped you work out that the second verse was about what the seed needed to grow?*
- *Tell me about something you found difficult in this poem and how you managed to work it out.*

After reading: Practice and reinforcement

- The students can reread the poem as they listen to the audio version. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Provide further opportunities for students to reread this poem, as well as other stories and poems about plants, the natural world, and taonga and treasures (see Related texts, above).
- The students could work in pairs to dramatise the poem, creating actions to convey the ideas. They could perform these as they recite the poem.
- Have the students choose a verse from the poem to illustrate.
- Discuss the idea of plants as food (as suggested by the illustration of the pātaka). The students could choose a food plant and find out more about it.
- The students could draw and write about a plant that’s important to them, for example, a plant that grows in their garden or that they have noticed at school or when visiting a park. Encourage students who have lived in other places to talk about plants they remember from their home countries.
- Have the students write a description of a personal treasure or taonga, for example, their parents, special places, toys, or family treasures. Ask them to describe and draw the taonga and explain why it’s special.