

Overview

The Green Team enter a competition that involves growing vegetables and using them to cook a meal, but the weather turns out to be a big problem. The team need to think creatively if they are to have a chance of winning. This story features characters (and food) from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

A related text in this journal is “Dig In!”, which is a report about the Garden to Table programme.

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

A PDF of the text and an audio version as an MP3 file are available at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Other related texts

Articles about school competitions or projects: “Our Recycled Worm Farm” (JJ 40); “A New Home for Mokokoko” (JJ 43); “Making Paper” (JJ 44); “Our Gifted Garden” (JJ 49); “Winning the Bledisloe Cup” in *How Do You Know?* (Connected, L2, 2014)

Texts about gardening and/or plants: “That’s the Idea” (JJ 44); “Pōhutukawa” (JJ 45); “Rongoā Māori”, “Helpful Trees and Plants” (JJ 48); “I Spy” (a sci-fi story), “Seeds”, “Kākano” (a poem) (JJ 50); “Garden with Science” in *How Do You Know?* (Connected, L2, 2014)

Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes below.

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 to form and test hypotheses and make inferences

Many characters and events and a storyline that involves several shifts in time

Ideas and information organised in paragraphs

The Green Team

by Diana Noonan

“Grab your sunhats, and follow me to the garden!” said Mr Wetini to the Green Team. “We’ve got a competition to win!”

The Green Team was the school’s gardening group. To win the competition, they would have to use vegetables from their school garden to make a special lunch for Mr and Mrs Farrell, the owners of the local garden centre. The prize was a new wheelbarrow and a set of gardening tools for the school.

“Lots of other schools will be entering the competition,” said Mr Wetini. “If we want to win, Mr and Mrs Farrell have to think our kai is the best.”



Sefa looked at the school garden and gave a big sigh. “The only vegetable here is silverbeet,” he said.

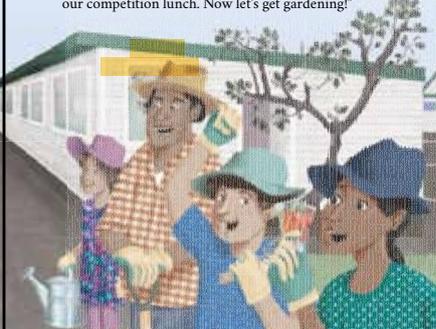
“We can’t make a special lunch with that,” added Ara.

“Silverbeet is gross!” said Nico.

“Silverbeet is strong,” said Mr Wetini. “It stayed alive all winter. Now it’s spring, and it’s still growing.”

“But we don’t *have* to use silverbeet to make our special lunch,” said Shai. “That’s why we got these.” She held up some packets of seed.

“That’s right,” said Lucca. “We’ve got three whole months. We can grow lots of different vegetables for our competition lunch. Now let’s get gardening!”



A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences, so that students are required to notice and use punctuation and linking words and phrases to clarify the links between ideas

Frequent use of dialogue, including some extended passages and more than one person speaking on a page

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, including descriptive vocabulary and subject-specific vocabulary, the meaning of which is supported by the context, sentence structure, or illustrations

English (Reading)

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

Health and Physical Education

Level 2 – Societal attitudes and values:

Explore how people's attitudes, values, and actions contribute to healthy physical and social environments.

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

Possible reading purpose

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

- To find out what happens when the Green Team enter the competition

Possible learning goals

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

- The students **make connections** between the ideas in the story and their prior knowledge to **form and test hypotheses** about what will happen.
- They search for key words and phrases to help them **make inferences** and **visualise** events in the story.
- They **form an opinion** about the author's purpose for writing this story (for example, to encourage gardening, team work, and/or trying something new).
- They **monitor** their reading, noticing when something is unclear, and they take action to solve the problem, for example, rereading a sentence or looking for clues close by.



Text and language features

Vocabulary

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including:
 - descriptive vocabulary: “competition”, “wheelbarrow”, “silverbeet”, “gross”, “sown”, “zucchini”, “recipes”, “explained”, “Italian”, “pūhā”, “tin foil”, “nervously”, “mouthful”, “continued”, “greenhouse”, “outdoor”
 - food names from other countries: “bietola”, “dolmas”, “bhaji”, “lasagna”, “spanakopita”, “palusami”.

Possible supporting strategies

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

Prompt the students to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- **when decoding:**
 - recognising words, word chunks, or syllables within words (“com-pe-ti-tion”, “wheel-barrow”, “silver-beet”, “tin-foil”, “pa-lu-sa-mi”, “mouth-ful”, “con-tin-ued”)
 - remembering that the macron indicates the long vowel sounds in te reo Māori words such as “pūhā”
 - noticing similarities to known words, for example, “grown” to work out “sown”.

Explain that this story has some words from languages other than English, and tell them not to worry if they are unsure of pronunciation. You or other students in the group can provide support for this. (Note that you can also use the audio version as a guide.)

- **when working out word meanings:**
 - using the context of the sentence and the surrounding sentences
 - using the illustrations, the unfolding meaning of the story, and their prior knowledge
 - reading on to look for further information.

Have a dictionary available for students to confirm or clarify word meanings.

Note that readers are able to use strategies for working out unfamiliar words only when they know most of the vocabulary in the text. For English language learners who need support with vocabulary, introduce and practise selected items before reading. See suggestions in “Introducing the text” and “After reading”. For more ideas, see [ESOL Online: Vocabulary](#).

Text features

- Some extended passages of dialogue
- The use of italics and dashes (and an ellipsis on page 7) to link ideas and create impact within a sentence.

Remind the students to notice the speech marks and paragraph indents when there is a new speaker.

Draw attention to the use of italics and/or dashes for emphasis. Model reading a section aloud, once with emphasis and then without. Draw out the idea that features such as italics and dashes clarify meaning, add interest, and make dialogue sound more realistic.



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.

- What did Mr Wetini mean when he said, “Silverbeet is strong”? What did you do to clarify that?
- Talk with a partner about a challenging word and what you did to work it out.

Introducing the text

- Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that your introduction to the text is effective in activating their prior knowledge and providing appropriate support for a successful first reading.
- Have the students read the title and view the illustrations on pages 2 and 3 to establish the gardening context. Encourage them to share their own gardening experiences. Note that the experiences of students from other countries may be different from those described in the story.
- Have the students read page 2 to clarify who, what, where, and why. Discuss the idea of a gardening competition. Ask them to look for clues in the illustrations on pages 2 and 3 (for example, the contrast in the characters' expressions and the absence of vegetables other than silverbeet in the garden) and form hypotheses (make predictions) about what may happen.
- If possible, have some silverbeet to show the students. Encourage them to share their opinions of silverbeet and to suggest some other vegetables the characters could grow.
- Share the reading purpose and the learning goal(s).
- Explain that the names of some food items in the story may be unfamiliar. Ask the students to attempt them but not to worry if they don't get them exactly right on the first reading. (You can listen to the audio version at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz before you use this book with students so that you can support them with pronunciation.)

Reading and discussing the text

Suggestions for ways that you can support the students to achieve the learning goals are in the right-hand column of the table below. **Select from and adapt** the suggestions according to your students' needs. These suggestions may apply to the first or a subsequent reading.

Encourage the students to read the text by themselves, intervening only if it's clear that a student needs help. There will be many opportunities to provide support with word-solving and comprehension on subsequent readings.

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). Often this will involve individual students rather than the whole group.

The first reading

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students use the illustrations on pages 2 and 3 to clarify who the characters are. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage the students to make connections between the text and the illustrations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They notice some differences of attitude among the characters (Sefa, Ara, and Nico making negative comments about silverbeet, Mr Wetini making positive comments, and Shai and Lucca enthusiastically sharing their plans). The students consider the contrasting attitudes and use this new information to review their initial predictions about the story. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompt them to notice the differing attitudes: <i>What does Sefa think about their chances in the competition? Do any of the characters agree with him?</i> Remind the students to keep their earlier predictions (from the introductory discussion) in mind as they read. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On page 4, the students notice phrases such as "Over the next few months", "watched and waited", "coldest spring for years", and "only a week away" and infer the weather has been awful and that time is running out. They make connections between these ideas to infer that the Green Team have a big problem. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Model your thinking: <i>I'm noticing that a lot of time has passed. I wonder if this will be a problem for them ...</i> Prompt the students to look for words and phrases in the paragraph to clarify the situation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As they read and discover new information (for example, Sefa's idea and the response to it), they continue to adjust their predictions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If necessary, remind the students to think about how the characters are responding to the problem. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the end of page 5, the students look for clues in the text and the illustrations to confirm which character is which and to match them with their family members.• They think, pair, and share their predictions about whether the Green Team will win the competition, then read on to check. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pause the reading at the end of page 5 to give the students an opportunity to track who is who. (This will provide support for matching the characters with the food items on page 6.)• Ask them to review their predictions about how the team will do in the competition. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students demonstrate self-monitoring and cross-checking. For example, in Lucca's dialogue on page 5, they use information from the sentence and the previous paragraph to work out the meaning of "bietola". | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remind the students of strategies they can use to work out word meanings. Support them with the names of any food items that are unfamiliar. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students use the descriptive language to help them visualise the setting and events. For example, on page 5, they use words and phrases such as "chopping, mixing, and beating", "Pots were steaming, and pans were sizzling" to build a picture of the busy kitchen. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompt them to look for words and phrases that will help them visualise what is happening. |

- On page 6, they make connections between the dialogue and what they already know about the characters to identify the speakers and match their dishes with the illustrations.
- Allow time for the students to refer to the illustrations and check earlier pages to clarify who is who. Remind the students not to be too worried about the names of the foods because you will come back to this later.
- The students identify clues on page 7 (for example, Mr and Mrs Farrell's smiles, the way they tried everything, and Mrs Farrell's comment) to infer that the visitors really enjoyed the food.
- Prompt them to think critically: *I wonder what the judges thought of the food. What clues can you find?*
- As the students read about the contents of the parcel on page 8, they infer that the Green Team are pleased about the worm farm, but possibly not so happy to see more silverbeet seed!
- *What do the Green Team think about their special prize?* Clarify that the word "Coo-oo!" is a drawn out version of "Cool!" Have the students practise saying it both ways. Draw out the idea that the author has spelt the word differently here to add emphasis and excitement.

Discussing the text after the first reading or subsequent readings

You can revisit this text several times to focus on different aspects. Several suggestions are given here. After initial discussion and perhaps some teacher modelling, the students could work on most of these tasks as independent after-reading tasks.

- The students express their opinions about the story. They share their knowledge and opinions about the food the characters made.
- Encourage the students to share their opinions of the student's response to the silverbeet crisis and of the food they made. Draw on any expertise within the group about the food items.
- The students summarise the main events in the story. They identify the two main problems (the weather and some characters' dislike of silverbeet) and how the characters overcame the problems.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose. Ask them to summarise the main events. *What problems did they face? They could have pulled out of the competition, but why didn't they?*
- They students identify themes, such as everyone helping, not giving up, finding out about foods, trying new things, and sharing ideas.
- Prompt the students to think critically: *What do you think the author wants us to learn or think about from reading this story?*

Supporting metacognition

With support, the students reflect on their learning.

- The students give examples of new information that prompted them to change their predictions about the team's chance of winning (for example, Shai's packets of seeds on page 3, the bad weather, time running out, Sefa's idea about asking for recipes).
- Remind the students of the learning goal(s).
- The students explain how they kept track of the characters (for example, by looking for clues in the illustrations and noticing who was speaking in the sections of dialogue).
- *Tell me about something that made you change your prediction about the Green Team winning?*
- *What helped you work out who the characters were?*

After reading: Practice and reinforcement

- The students can reread the story 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 story as well as other texts with similar themes and topics (see "Related texts").
- Ask the students to construct a timeline to show the sequence of events. They will need to look for indicators of time in the story, such as "By the end of the afternoon", "Over the next few months", "only a week away", "The next day", "On the morning of the competition", "At twelve o'clock", "Then", "When the meal was over", "Two weeks later, just before the school holidays".
- Have the students work in pairs to track the actions of specific characters. Each pair could choose one or two characters and track their involvement in the story, looking for clues in the text and illustrations. They could highlight relevant passages on a printout of the story or onscreen using the PDF version. Have them present their findings in a chart or comic-strip format, using pictures, speech bubbles, thought bubbles, and/or descriptive phrases.
- Use extracts from the story to reinforce the strategy of inferring. For example, on page 7, have the students identify the words and phrases that help the reader infer what the judges think of the food (for example, "a mouthful", "ate a piece", "a little of everything", "a little more"). Similarly, you could have the students explore how the author conveys the students' attitudes about their gardening challenges on pages 2–4.
- Ask the students to draw (or use photos) and write about their own experiences of gardening. Encourage students from other countries to share their knowledge about gardening and vegetables from their home cities, towns, or villages.
- The students could find out more about the dishes mentioned in the story. Support the students to use a world map to locate the countries that the recipes came from. Encourage them to find out about their own family's favourite vegetable recipes.
- Have each student draw (or find pictures of) one vegetable they like and one they don't like and add labels that describe their opinions of each vegetable, for example, "gross", "horrible", "bitter", "stringy", "crunchy", "tastes great with tomato sauce", "you can make fritters with it". Alternatively, they could choose a vegetable to write a description about or to find out more about, sort vegetables by particular characteristics, or rank them in order of preference.