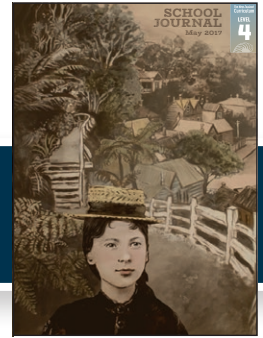


Origin Story (with fairy)

by David Larsen

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Year 8



Overview

This TSM contains a wide range of information and suggestions for teachers to pick and choose from, depending on the needs of their students and their purpose for using the text. The materials provide multiple opportunities for revisiting the text several times.

In “Origin Story”, schoolgirl Moana has a surprise meeting with a fairy. As the fairy greets her and introduces itself, Moana is forced to suspend disbelief. Time is also “suspended” in a freeze-frame style, and Moana eventually realises that she has a chance – and the power – to change the course of events.

The use of technical terms such as “the image froze”, “flashback”, “slomo”, and “the image reset” encourages readers to visualise as they read – watching events and possibilities unfold. The flashbacks and suspension of time will be challenging for some students, and the story will need to be read more than once.

Reference to contemporary topics, such as shape-shifting powers and superheroes adds humour and will engage readers right until the end – where the author leaves us wondering.

This article:

- combines fantasy with reality
- provides opportunity for students to make links to what they know about visual narrative
- follows a traditional story structure – with an open-ended conclusion
- has descriptive language and dialogue
- plays with the conventions of superhero stories.

A PDF of the text is available at www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz

Texts related by theme

“Cancel the Invasion” SJ L3 Nov 2016 | “The World Will End, Said the Cat” SJ L4 Nov 2016 | “The Duel: The Final Challenge” SJ L3 Aug 2016 | “The Red Ball” SJ L3 May 2015 | “The Duel: The Inventors Awaken” SJ L3 May 2016

Text characteristics from the year 8 reading standard

around to stand in front of the scene. For the first time, Moana noticed that it was only about 20 centimetres tall.

“What happens next,” said the fairy, “is a choose-your-own-adventure sort of thing. Watch.” It floated out of Moana’s field of view. “Go,” it said into her ear.

The image unfroze. Moana saw herself and the little boy vanish. They were there, and then they were gone. The truck slewed from side to side and skidded to a halt, horn blaring. The cars behind it stopped. Drivers jumped out and ran around the truck. They were searching, Moana realised slowly, for the bodies of the two children they assumed the truck had hit.

“Now in slomo,” said the fairy. “Watch carefully.”

The image reset. Frozen little boy, frozen looming truck, frozen running Moana.

“Go,” whispered the fairy.

Moana saw herself whip over the road and up the driveway opposite and out of sight gone in a blink. The little boy was gone, too. The truck had not moved

elements that require interpretation, such as complex plots, sophisticated themes, and abstract ideas

She found she could speak. “This is crazy!” she yelled. “How are you doing this?”

“Yes!” said the fairy. “Exactly the question!”

“Then answer it!”

“Superheroes,” said the fairy seriously, “are impossible. Ridiculous, crazy, impossible.”

“No they’re not! They’re real! Catman! The Baroness! Alligator Woman and Sidekick Girl!”

“Great, aren’t they?” said the fairy. “Some of my best work.”

Moana was incensed. “They’re nothing to do with you! Catman is the world’s greatest detective! The Baroness is the last survivor of a lost alien world! Alligator Woman –”

“Was bitten by a mutant alligator and gained shape-shifting powers,” said the fairy. “Yes, I know. I tried to talk her into a less painful origin story, but she’s all about the drama. We’ll go with something a bit simpler for you, I hope.”

complex layers of meaning, and/or information that is irrelevant to the identified purpose for reading (that is, competing information), requiring students to infer meanings or make judgments

The chaotic dance of the little motes of light seemed to be slowing.

“This is crazy,” Moana whispered.

“No, what’s crazy is super-speed,” said the fairy. “If you ran as fast as you just saw yourself run, the acceleration would slosh your brain against the back of your skull so hard you’d die. When you grabbed that poor little boy, the bones in your hands would shatter. For him, the impact would be just the same as being hit by the truck. And the air could not slide out of your way fast enough. It would be like trying to run through a hurricane. Super-speed is impossible.”

“Then how ...,” began Moana. The lights were definitely slowing.

“You ran straight into traffic to save someone you had no hope of saving,” said the fairy. “You could easily have been killed. My job is to pick heroes. I’m picking you. But first you have to explain to me how your powers make

sentences that vary in length, including long, complex sentences that contain a lot of information

was closed. She saw herself run right up the door, onto the roof of the garage, and out of sight.

“Bam!” yelled the fairy. “Super-speed, baby!” It floated in front of Moana’s face and leant in slightly. Its expression was abruptly stern. “Now all you have to do is tell me how you did it.”

The street, the cars, the truck, and the people all dissolved. Moana and the fairy were floating alone in the middle of the rainbow blizzard of lights. She found she could speak. “This is crazy!” she yelled. “How are you doing this?”

“Yes!” said the fairy. “Exactly the question!”

“Then answer it!”

“Superheroes,” said the fairy seriously, “are impossible. Ridiculous, crazy, impossible.”

“No they’re not! They’re real! Catman! The Baroness! Alligator Woman and

metaphor, analogy, and connotative language that is open to interpretation



Reading standard: by the end of year 8

VOCABULARY

Possible supporting strategies

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “distracted”, “oncoming”, “origin”, “flashback”, “sleeting”, “proclaimed”, “headlong”, “barely”, “slewed”, “looming”, “abruptly”, “stern”, “incensed”, “mutant”, “chaotic”, “motes”, “outraged”
- Words with more than one meaning, including “froze”, “whip”, “scoop”, “dissolved”, “impact”, “pick”, “flavour”

- There are a number of words that may challenge some students, although most will be clear in context. If students need support, it may be useful to direct them to what the word is doing in the sentence, for example, *This word is telling us more about ...*; *This word is describing the action where ...*
- To support English language learners, explain how some words have more than one meaning in English. *What does the word “freeze” and “frozen” bring to mind?* If appropriate, set up a quick game of Statues, where students have to immediately stop what they’re doing and keep still.
- Students can create Four Corner vocabulary cards to help learn each word. They divide the cards into four and complete one card for each word.

Write the word.	Write the word in a sentence.
Write a definition of the word.	Illustrate the word.

- *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.
- See also [ESOL Online, Vocabulary](#), for examples of other strategies to support students with vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

Possible supporting strategies

- Some understanding of technical terms including “flashback”, “the image froze”, “unfroze”, “slomo”, “the image reset”
- Understanding the importance of road safety and road rules
- Familiarity with superheroes and the mythological concept of shape-shifting
- Familiarity with “pick-a-path” type stories
- Some knowledge of origin stories

- Prompt students to discuss what they know about moving images (film/video).
- Invite their responses and put together some examples of films that use slow motion and freeze-frame.
- Lead discussion about the difference between following a narrative in written text and in visual text. *What do filmmakers do to move the story along? What does a writer do?*
- Check that the students understand the concepts of flashback, superheroes, and shape-shifting.
- Explain what an origin story is (the back-story revealing how characters became the protagonist or antagonist in a narrative). Ask students if they know any other origin stories.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

Possible supporting strategies

- Third-person fiction, combining fantasy with reality
- Traditional story elements of characters, setting, and plot
- A main character (Moana), a protagonist (the fairy) who moves the story along, a character (the little boy) who is referred to and who is important to the plot, and an unseen character (the truck driver)
- A problem and a resolution
- The use of flashback and suspension of time to foreshadow events
- The use of the pronoun “it” for the fairy (The text says it’s “unclear whether it was a female fairy or a male one”)
- The concept of a “choose your own adventure” for the main character
- The use of descriptive verbs and adjectives that provide details of the setting and the events

- Provide a selection of traditional tales.
- Review the features of narratives. Discuss what writers do to end a story. Ask the students to share stories they have enjoyed and to focus on the ending. Prompt their critical thinking about the range of endings that writers choose. *Was the main character the “hero”? Was there a villain in the story? Did things work out for everyone? Did you feel satisfied at the end?*
- Model jotting down notes about the elements of a story as we read, including characters, setting, problem, events, and resolution.
- Draw out students’ prior experiences of stories that contain flashbacks. Ask them to discuss why they think the author used this technique and how it added to the experience of the story.



Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 4 – Ideas: Show an increasing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

– Language features: Show an increasing understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 4 – Language features: Use a range of language features appropriately, showing an increasing understanding of their effects.

Possible first reading purpose

- To enjoy a fantasy story that involves superpowers and choices

Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To explore the ideas about freezing the events and changing the outcome
- To identify and analyse the author's language choices

Possible writing purposes

- To rewrite a well-known story, using flashback
- To continue “Origin Story” and create either a surprise ending or a satisfying ending
- To name and describe the superhero that Moana becomes



Instructional focus – Reading

English

Level 4 – Ideas: Show an increasing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts;

Language features: Show an increasing understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

First reading

- Set the purpose for reading.
- Based on your knowledge of the students, read the story aloud or have them read the whole story independently before discussing it.
- Prompt students to recall the elements of a typical narrative.
- Explain that this story uses flashbacks and freeze-frame to describe what happens or what might happen.
- Ask students to read the first page. Ask questions to help them reflect on what has happened. *Who have we met so far? Who is the fairy talking to when it says “You’re probably wondering ...”? Has it left us wondering too? What have we found out about the fairy? Have a chat with your partner about the story so far.*
- Direct them to continue reading to find out what happens in the flashback.

If the students struggle with this text

- Use the title and the illustration to predict the type of story this is. *Can we call it a fairy story?*
- Use thinking aloud to discuss the meaning of the title. *We know that “origin” means where something begins. I wonder where the fairy comes in?*
- Have the students talk to a partner about their predictions. *What tells us that there is going to be something magical or supernatural in this story? Direct students to the first line (“Hello,” said the superhero fairy.)*
- Remind students about the use of dialogue – noticing where it is, understanding who is talking, and realising the purpose of it (to show us character traits or to move the story along).

Subsequent readings How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose.

The teacher

Direct the students to identify each place in the story that involves a freeze-frame, a slomo, or a flashback.

- *Have you read other stories, or watched videos, that involve flashbacks? How do the “choose your own adventure” stories work?*
- *On the first page of “Origin Story”, we have a freeze-frame. How has the writer told us that time has stopped?*

Direct students to reread the paragraph on page 45, beginning “The image unfroze”. Discuss the scenario.

- *How can we tell what actually happened? Is Moana being brave or foolhardy?*

Have groups of students prepare a freeze-frame. A freeze-frame is a silent, motionless depiction of a scene. The students work together and use their bodies to make an image capturing an idea, theme, or moment in time from the text. Each group presents their freeze-frame to the rest of the class.

The teacher

Ask the students to reflect on the visual images that were brought to mind as they read.

- *We are given a detailed description of what the fairy looks like. What has the writer included?*

Discuss the use of descriptive language.

- *Look at the sentence “It was hovering in mid-air, surrounded by a riot of rainbow flecks of light.” The fairy was “hovering” – what do we picture with that word? Does it suggest movement? The fairy was “surrounded by a riot of rainbow flecks of light” – how does the extra information help make the image clearer? Does it strengthen the image? Does “riot” imply movement?*
- *Moana watches herself react: “an instant, headlong, hopeless dash.” Why has the writer chosen three words to describe her dash? What is the impact? Do we get more sense of the situation?*
- *What is the effect of the words “came charging”, when the writer is telling us what the little boy did? Would it be as vivid if he had written “A little boy came running after it”?*

The students:

- locate examples of freeze-frame and flashback in the story
- make connections to their experience of watching slow-motion footage, for example, in sport, when they couldn’t follow the events in normal time
- evaluate the events and think critically to decide which scenario is the “real” one
- evaluate the writer’s use of freezing the action and slowing events down
- synthesise Moana’s actions with their own moral judgments to draw conclusions about her motives.

The students:

- locate and identify the impact of words that describe the fairy, Moana’s reaction to the situation on the road, and the way that the boy followed the ball
- discuss and analyse the impact of the author’s choice of words and phrases
- evaluate the effect of the descriptive language and extra details and make connections to their own writing, considering what readers need to be told.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *I noticed that you were able to use your experience of reading “choose your own adventure” stories to help unpack what was going on in this story. That’s a good example of how making connections to your prior knowledge and experiences can help you better understand something that seems unfamiliar at first.*

METACOGNITION

- *Is this the kind of story you enjoy reading? What makes you say that? Do you think the technique of using freeze-frame and flashback can be used in any narrative? Is it useful?*



Reading standard: by end of year 8



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English Level 4 – Language features: Use a range of language features appropriately, showing an increasing understanding of their effects.

Text excerpts from “Origin Story (with fairy)”

Page 45

The sleeting rainbow colours cleared. Moana still couldn't move or even feel her body. It was like a movie was being projected into her head. She saw the street again, but this time from above and from a distance, as though she were standing on a platform in the sky. The usual after-school traffic was whooshing by. “An ordinary day,” announced the fairy. “Or is it?”

On the far side of the road, a large red ball came bouncing down a driveway. A little boy came charging after it. There was a truck a few car lengths down the road, going a little bit faster than it should.

Examples of text characteristics

FLASHBACK

Flashbacks are used when there is an important backstory that the reader needs to know or when the author wants to clarify something in the plot. In this case, the flashback is used to clarify what happened. It takes the reader (and the main character) back to show us the events.

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Explain that some stories are sequential and some are written with deliberate pauses or interruptions. Invite the students' responses, prompting them to recall other examples of stories (or films) where flashback is used.

- *Does the flashback always go back a long time? How does flashback differ from rewind?*

Prompt them to recall a well-known story, for example, the story of the three little pigs.

- *Talk with a partner, and see if you can recall the sequence of events. You could use storyboarding.*

Invite students to interrupt the events with a flashback that will add to the main story, for example, the reason for the Big Bad Wolf's actions towards the pigs. English language learners may like to use a familiar legend or story from their own culture.


Ask questions and prompt them for agreement.

- *Where would a flashback fit?*
- *Do we know all we need to know about the wolf? Why is he so keen to blow the pigs' houses down? What has caused him to be so determined to catch the pigs?*

Use shared writing to create a short flashback together. For English language learners, it may be best to illustrate flashback using their own experiences before moving into fictional writing (that is, moving from concrete to abstract).

Have the students work collaboratively to create a flashback in their own stories.

- *What could be useful for the reader to know? Does a flashback show us more about the character? Does it fill in missing information?*

 The students could write their explanation on a Google Doc so they can give and receive feedback.

Page 48

The fairy looked outraged. Then it looked thoughtful. Then it started to laugh and, laughing, it faded slowly away.

Moana was standing in the middle of the street. The cars, the truck, and the little boy were motionless around her.

She began to run.

NARRATIVE ENDINGS

A range of endings can be used in a typical narrative, such as: a surprise or twist; a circular ending, which links back to the beginning; a cliffhanger ending, often used in a serial; an open ending, where readers (or viewers) are left to wonder what might have happened.

Have students read the ending of “Origin Story” again.

- *Is it clear whether Moana will save the little boy?*
- *Is it a happy ending? Is it satisfying?*

Discuss the endings of stories with students.

- *What makes a good story?*
- *How do we want a story to end?*
- *Is a “happy” ending satisfying?*
- *How do we feel when there is a twist at the end?*
- *Why do we care what happens?*

Support students to identify the type of ending in a range of stories.

Direct students to review their own writing.

- *What sort of ending does your story have? Have you provided a twist for your readers or did you create a happy ending?*

Text excerpts from
“Origin Story (with fairy)”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher
(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Page 44

It was unclear whether it was a female fairy or a male one. It was slender and long-haired and wore a sparkly blue leotard thing with striped leggings and a red cape. It had pointy ears. It was hovering in mid-air, surrounded by a riot of rainbow flecks of light.

DESCRIPTION

Descriptions of characters, settings, and appearances can provide the details that readers need to visualise and make connections.

Ask the students to reread the description of the fairy.

- *Do you get a clear picture of the fairy in your mind?*
- *What words make the description of the fairy more vivid?*
- *What things does the writer describe?*
- *What things does he miss out?*

Prompt prior knowledge of describing characters, real and imagined.

- *What will your readers need to know? What details will help them get a clear picture? Do we need to include details of physical appearance and behaviour? Will you include dialogue?*
- *There is a set order we follow when grouping adjectives: quantity, opinion, fact, comparison, classification (and then the noun).*

English language learners may need direct instruction on the order.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You've added the word "lumbering" to your description of the elephant. That detail helps me as a reader to imagine how it moves and was really important to understand what happened next.*

METACOGNITION

- *Tell me about your audience and what you wanted them to understand. How does thinking about your audience help you decide how much information to provide?*



Writing standard: by end of year 8



The Literacy Learning Progressions