



Overview

This TSM contains 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 material provides many opportunities for revisiting the text.

“Baskets of Fire” is a pakiwaitara – a traditional Māori story that explains natural phenomena or why something is the way it is. This pakiwaitara tells how the Ngāti Tūwharetoa explorer Ngātoro-i-rangi discovers Mount Tongariro and wants to claim it for his people. He asks the atua (gods) to send a snowstorm to stop any rivals claiming it. However, the storm is so severe he nearly dies from the cold. He calls on his sisters in Hawaiki to send fire to warm him. The sisters send two demi-gods carrying baskets of fire, but not all of the baskets reach Ngātoro-i-rangi. The demi-gods drop some on the way, forming the areas of volcanic activity that stretch from Whakaari (White Island) through Rotorua to Mount Tongariro.

This story:

- explores the connection Māori have with the land and their ancestors, as related in their pepeha
- confirms the place of Māori as tangata whenua and the importance of the geographical landmarks in Māori tradition
- provides a positive role model of a strong and brave early explorer
- includes features of traditional stories, such as characters with supernatural qualities, a task or a goal, and an explanation for the creation of natural phenomena
- has illustrations and a map to support the text.

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

Texts related by theme

“Kuri” SJ L2 Oct 2015 | “Awarua: The Taniwha of Porirua” SJ L2 May 2016 | “The Sons of Ma’afu” SJ L2 Oct 2015 | “Kāhu and Hōkioi” JJ 51 | “Rātā me te Rākau” JJ 57

Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

We have retained the links to the National Standards while a new assessment and reporting system is being developed.

For more information on assessing and reporting in the post-National Standards era, see: <http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-and-reporting-guide>

Near the lake, he saw a magnificent mountain. Its beauty was reflected in the calm waters of the great lake below.

Ngātoro-i-rangi wanted to claim the mountain for his people. The land here was good, and the mana of the mountain would protect them. However, there were two other explorers in the area. Their names were Tia and Hape-ki-tūārangi. Ngātoro-i-rangi knew he had to climb the mountain and claim it before they did.

some abstract ideas that are clearly supported by concrete examples in the text or easily linked to the students’ prior knowledge

Te Pupū and Te Hoata for being so careless. He stamped his foot. It made a large hole or crater in the side of the mountain. He tipped the last embers into the crater. The heat from the mountain was enough to save him, but it was too late for Ngāuruhoe.

Now Ngātoro-i-rangi could feelahi tipua beneath him. From the top of

Ngāuruhoe

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

Ngātoro-i-rangi was a brave explorer. He was also a powerful tohunga. A tohunga is an expert, and Ngātoro-i-rangi was an expert in many things. He knew about the stars and the sea. He also knew about magic. He lived a very long time ago, when the first people came and made Aotearoa their home.

Ngātoro-i-rangi came from Hawaiki on the great waka Te Arawa. He used his knowledge of the stars, the sea, and the birds to guide the waka on that long journey.

some words and phrases that are ambiguous or unfamiliar to the students, the meaning of which is supported by the context or clarified by illustrations, and/or written explanations

A cold southerly wind is blowing. It’s the kind of wind that has snow on its breath. It’s the kind of wind that makes you wish you were cosy and warm at home. And it’s the kind of wind that makes me think of a story from many, many years ago – the story of Ngātoro-i-rangi and the baskets of fire.

figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, or personification



Reading standard: by the end of year 4

VOCABULARY

- Names of characters, places, and waka in te reo Māori, including “Ngātoro-i-rangi”, “Aotearoa”, “Hawaiki”, “Te Arawa”, “Ngāuruhoe”, “Taupō”, “Tia”, “Hape-ki-tūārangi”, “Tāwhirimātea”, “Rūaumoko”, “Te Pupū”, “Te Hoata”, “Whakaari”, “Moutohorā”, “Rotorua”, “Tarawera”, “Rotorua”, “Ōrākei Kōrako”, “Tongariro”, “Tokaanu”, “Ketetahi”
- Possibly unfamiliar te reo Māori terms: “tohunga”, “waka”, “mana”, “atua”, “ahi tipua”, “kete”
- Other words and phrases that may be unfamiliar, including “southerly”, “inland”, “slave”, “peaks”, “claim”, “sleet”, “fire demons”, “demi-gods”, “embers”, “crater”, “volcanic”, “live under the protection”
- Adverbs of time, including “many, many years ago”, “a very long time ago”, “Today”, “When he lived in Hawaiki”, “Straight away”, “As they ran”, “When finally they reached Tongariro”, “still tell the story”, “still live”, “so long ago”, “whenever a cold southerly blows”
- Adverbs of place, including “In Hawaiki”, “From the top of the mountain”, “The place where he received the last kete”
- Figurative language, including “It’s the kind of wind that has snow on its breath”, “The cold seemed to stab right through his body”, “He spoke his words even though they seemed to be ripped from his mouth and scattered by the wind”, “under the protection of the mountain”

Possible supporting strategies

- Familiarise yourself with any of the Māori vocabulary and names that are new to you. You could use the knowledge of your students, other staff, or experts in your community to provide accurate pronunciation and support for meaning. In addition:
 - consult [Te Aka](#), the online Māori dictionary, to confirm definitions
 - use the [te reo Māori curriculum guidelines](#) to help with teaching Māori vocabulary and concepts.
- Identify the words that may prove challenging for students. Have the students recall the strategies they use when they meet an unfamiliar word. Provide opportunities for them to clarify the words before reading the text.
- Explain that there are many names in this story. Remind the students that proper nouns have capital letters.
- Prompt discussion about the use of figurative language. *What are some other examples of figurative language used to describe our land?* (Examples might include “Te Ika a Māui” or “Aotearoa”.)
- There are many words and phrases in this text associated with warmth and fire and cold and storms. Have the students identify these and put them into lists. Use them in “[word sort](#)” activities, or have them create word clouds or word art. The use of a verb cloze task can be helpful for students who have difficulty using tenses. Delete all the verbs in a section and have the students insert the correct verb into each space.
- 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

- Understanding that Māori came to Aotearoa a long time ago, travelling long distances from their homeland of Hawaiki
- Some familiarity with tikanga Māori, in particular the telling of pakiwaitara
- Understanding that naming geographical areas is an important part of claiming a new land
- Familiarity with myths and legends that explain the formation of various geographical features
- Some knowledge about volcanoes and thermal activity
- Some knowledge of the features of oral storytelling

Possible supporting strategies

- Activate the student’s prior knowledge about the first Māori explorers. *When do you think Māori came to Aotearoa? Where did they come from? How did they get here? Why do you think they might have come? What do you think they would have needed to achieve their goals?*
- Tell the students that they are about to read a retelling of a Māori myth, or pakiwaitara. If necessary, let them know that myths are traditional stories that often explain why the world is the way it is. If you have students from other cultures, encourage them to share what they know of similar myths and legends from their home countries.
- Tell the students that this pakiwaitara provides an explanation for the names of certain places in Aotearoa. Have them think, pair, and share what they know about the meanings behind familiar place names, particularly those that are local or nearby.
- Use the map to locate the places mentioned in the text. You could also use Google Maps. Have the students share any experiences of visiting the North Island’s thermal areas.
- Review the students’ understanding of cultural concepts covered in the story and, where necessary, build their background knowledge of these. Some students may wish to share what they already know.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- The retelling, in written form, of a pakiwaitara that explains a natural phenomenon
- The features of a myth, such as a setting in the distant past, characters who are special in some way (not always human, sometimes with super powers), and an important problem to be solved
- Direct address to the reader: “makes you wish”
- The story’s message about the relationship between people, the land, and the atua that protect them
- The use of repetition to add emphasis, including “It’s the kind of wind”, “many, many years”, “He knew about”, “in this new land”, “On this mountain”, “He spoke his words”, “their journey – the journey”
- Vivid descriptive language
- A strongly-drawn central character

Possible supporting strategies

- Review the structures of oral and written stories. Discuss the formulaic expressions that occur in many stories, such as “many, many years ago”, “tell the story”, “remember the story”.
- Point out the repetition in the first paragraph. Explain the purpose of repetition in oral storytelling – not only does it add power to the words, but it’s also a good way to remember a story. Ask the students to look out for other examples of repetition and to think about its effect on them as readers.
- Refer to a myth the students know well, such as Māui and the Sun, and draw attention to its special features.



Sounds and Words

Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

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

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 2 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of structures.

– Purposes and audiences: Show some understanding of how to shape texts for different purposes and audiences.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Level 2 – Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people’s customs, traditions, and values.

– Understand how the status of Māori as tangata whenua is significant for communities in New Zealand.

Possible first reading purpose

- To read and enjoy a legend from Ngāti Tūwharetoa.

Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To understand how pakiwaitara are used to explain natural phenomena
- To find out how a brave and powerful tohunga brought volcanic fire to Aotearoa
- To identify how two significant mountains in the middle of the North Island got their names.

Possible writing purposes

- To retell the story
- To retell another Māori legend
- To describe how a nearby place, such as a mountain or river, got its name.



The New Zealand Curriculum

Instructional focus – Reading

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

First reading

- Share the purpose for reading with the students.
- You may need to remind the students that this is a traditional tale that explains a natural phenomenon.
- Read the first page together and then flip through the pictures to set the scene. Based on this preview, have the students make a prediction about why a cold southerly wind might make the author think about Ngātoro-i-rangi and his baskets of fire.
- Allow the students to read on independently for enjoyment and to find out what happens.
- After the first reading, ask the students to discuss whether their predictions were confirmed.

If the students require more scaffolding

- Remind the students of strategies that are particularly useful on a first reading, such as making predictions, reading on, rereading, and making connections with their prior knowledge.
- Have the students highlight the adverbs of time and place and use them to create a timeline of events. Support them to notice the great expanse of time in this story, from the distant past to the present. *What do you notice about time in this story? When do you think the story took place?*
- Discuss the sentence “Of course, being atua, they didn’t always do exactly what he asked them to do.” *Why “of course”? What do you need to know about atua for this sentence to make sense? Why was this sentence in brackets? What was the author’s purpose in writing this sentence? Are there other places where the author has assumed you know things? Keep a record of those places, and we’ll talk about them when we finish reading.*
- Discuss the sentence “They were in such a rush, they didn’t notice that each time they stopped, they left some of the embers behind.” *Why are we told this? Can you make a prediction about what might happen? What information can help you make your prediction?*
- For information about the language function of recounting (which includes narrative texts) at different levels, see [Supporting English Language Learning in Primary Schools \(SELLIPS\): A Guide for Teachers of Years 3 and 4](#), pages 15–19.

Subsequent readings How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose. Where possible, have the students work in pairs to discuss the questions and prompts in this section.

The teacher

If the students have not already done so, have them highlight the adverbs of time and place and use them to create a timeline that clarifies the order of events.

Have the students retell the story orally in pairs. You could ask them to take turns to retell parts of the story. Listen in as they build the story together.

See [Supporting English Language Learning in Primary Schools \(SELLIPS\): A Guide for Teachers Years 3 and 4](#), pages 15–19, for teaching suggestions to scaffold language learning.

The students:

- reread the story and clarify the setting and the sequence of events
- identify the time markers and use these to create a timeline
- retell the story in sequence, including the main events and supporting details
- support each other to use vocabulary from the story
- use their timelines or the story to check that their retelling was accurate.

Subsequent readings (cont.)

The teacher

Have the students think, pair, and share their impressions of the central character, Ngātoro-i-rangi. Encourage them to think about his actions and how other people responded to him, as well as what we are directly told. Model how to do this, for example:

Ngātoro-i-rangi was willing to risk his life to claim the mountain for his people. He must have been very brave and resolute. But he “knew he had to climb the mountain before [the other two explorers]”. Does that mean he was very competitive, or does it just mean that was the way people did things?

Then have each pair of students draw a simple pie chart with a sketch of Ngātoro-i-rangi in the centre and information about his personality, relationships, feelings, and beliefs around him. Review the charts and prompt the students to draw conclusions about what they learnt about Ngātoro-i-rangi.

- *How would you describe Ngātoro-i-rangi to someone who didn't know this story? Why was it possible for him to claim the mountain?*
- *What is the author's opinion of Ngātoro-i-rangi? What do you think of Ngātoro-i-rangi?*
- *Why do you think his story has lasted for so long? Why did the author think it was worth retelling?*
- *What evidence do you have to justify your opinions?*

The teacher

Model how to use visualising as a strategy to gain a deeper understanding of a text.

The writer has said “The cold seemed to stab right through his body and go deep into his bones” and “He spoke his words even though they seemed to be ripped from his mouth and scattered by the wind”. To me, it's as if the cold and wind are living things, physically attacking Ngātoro-i-rangi and Ngāuruhoe and trying to take their lives. I see a knife stabbing into them and can imagine the pain of the cold going deep into their bodies. I imagine them trying to talk and the words being completely lost by the screaming wind.

Ask the students to describe, in pairs, what they see when reading the same two sentences. You could suggest that they draw the scene. Then ask the students to choose their own passage from the story and tell their partner what they see when they read these words.

METACOGNITION

- *What knowledge helped you to make connections with this text? How did it help you?*
- *How did your knowledge of other myths and legends help you to make sense of this story?*
- *What have you learned from reading this story?*

The students:

- make inferences and locate the parts of the text that provide evidence about the character of Ngātoro-i-rangi
- identify the cultural beliefs and values that are reflected in this story
- use the evidence to draw conclusions about the character of Ngātoro-i-rangi
- infer the author's purpose for writing this story.

The students:

- identify the words and phrases in the story that help to create a picture in their minds
- choose another scene and describe their visualisations, using the words and phrases as evidence
- evaluate the effectiveness of particular words or phrases that help them to create a visual image in their minds.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You were very sympathetic to Ngāuruhoe and the way he was treated, but you also understood that slavery was a part of the culture in those days and that he and Ngātoro-i-rangi had a close relationship. This shows me you have a good understanding of “relating to others” – one of the key competencies that we are exploring this term.*
- *I noticed you highlighted the words that gave clues about the character of Ngātoro-i-rangi. That's a really good strategy for noticing and focusing on the clues that help you make inferences about him.*



Reading standard: by the end of year 4



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English Level 2 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of structures. Purposes and audiences: Show some understanding of how to shape texts for different purposes and audiences.

Text excerpts from “Baskets of Fire”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Page 26

Ngātoro-i-rangi was a brave explorer. He was also a powerful tohunga. A tohunga is an expert, and Ngātoro-i-rangi was an expert in many things. He knew about the stars and the sea. He also knew about magic. He lived a very long time ago, when the first people came to make Aotearoa their home.

RECOUNT

The purpose of a recount is to tell the reader about a past experience. The focus is on a sequence of episodes, usually based around a particular event. Recounts typically begin with background information about who was involved, when, and where. They are also typified by the use of verbs, describing actions and events, and by linking words indicating a sequence.

Review the features of a recount, relating them to the pakiwaitara the students have just read. Tell the students that they will now write their own pakiwaitara. They could:

- use their timelines to retell the story of Ngātoro-i-rangi and the baskets of fire but from the perspective of a different character
- retell another Māori legend or a legend from their own culture
- describe how a nearby place, such as a mountain or river, got its name.

To prepare for this, the students should brainstorm their ideas and develop a plan.

DIGITAL TOOLS  The students could use Popplet, Mindmup Chrome app, or Google Drawing to do this.

Ask questions to prompt thinking:

- *What is your purpose?*
- *Who is your audience? How will you make your story interesting to your audience?*
- *Who is your central character? What was their role in the pakiwaitara?*
- *What does your character care about?*
- *What information do you want to convey about your character? How will you show your reader what your character is like?*
- *What does your character think or feel about what's happening?*
- *How will you show the sequence of events? How will you indicate that events took place a long time ago? What words or phrases will be most effective?*
- *What are some other storytelling features of “Baskets of Fire” that you could use?*

Page 32

The mountains still tell the story of Ngātoro-i-rangi in their names: Tongariro (which means “strong, southerly wind”) and Ngāuruhoe ... The place where he received the last kete is called Ketetahi. The descendants of Ngātoro-i-rangi still live under the protection of the mountain he climbed so long ago.

PURPOSE

Writers who use stories that have been passed down orally are giving readers another way of learning about the past. By writing them down, writers keep the stories alive and help readers understand things about the present, such as how places were named.

Have the students review their plans and write their first drafts, ensuring that the purpose is clear. Then have them swap their stories and check that their partner understands the purpose of the story. Have each student comment on one thing they liked about their partner's current draft and offer one piece of constructive feedback.

DIGITAL TOOLS  The students could use Google Docs to share their work.

Explain that they don't need to take each other's advice but that professional writers often workshop their writing and that published writing is almost always edited.

Page 29

Back in Hawaiki, his sisters suddenly felt a cold breeze. Then they felt the sting of ice on their faces. They drew their cloaks closer around themselves. Even though it was warm in Hawaiki, they could see their breath hang frozen in the air.

DESCRIPTION

Writers choose specific words and phrases to convey images and describe scenes and events vividly.

Reiterate how writers use descriptive language to create an image for the reader. Focus on these sentences and have the students identify the descriptive words, then review their writing to consider how they could better support the reader to visualise the scene.

- *What picture do these sentences paint for you in your mind? What precise nouns, verbs, and adjectives has the author used?*
- *What are some other words you could use to describe what the sisters experienced?*
- *Select a short section from your writing. How could you rewrite it to give the readers a stronger image of the scene?*

Have the students share and respond to each other's drafts before publishing them.

METACOGNITION

- *Tell me about the feedback your partner gave you. How did you use that to develop your draft?*
- *How did you find the feedback process? What did it feel like to get feedback ... and to give it? Why do you think writers often seek feedback?*

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *Initially, you had a very long descriptive passage about your maunga. I notice you cut it down, and I think it reads better now. Sometimes, a few well-chosen words can be more effective than a long paragraph.*
- *You've reused words in te reo Māori from the story and even added your own. It's wonderful to see you expanding your knowledge of te reo and using it confidently. We all need to get better at that if we're going to tell the stories of Aotearoa.*