

School Journal Story Library

Level 3

School Journal Story Library is a targeted series that supplements other instructional series texts. It provides additional scaffolds and supports for teachers to use to accelerate students' literacy learning.

In His Blood: The Bruce McLaren Story

by Paul Mason
Readability level: year 4



Overview

New Zealander Bruce McLaren was an internationally renowned racing-car designer, driver, engineer, and inventor. *In His Blood* covers several defining points in Bruce's life, including his childhood struggle with Perthes disease, his breakthrough at the New Zealand Grand Prix, his time racing on the international circuit, and his founding of the highly successful racing team Bruce McLaren Motor Racing Limited. The article supports the technology curriculum by featuring breakouts on Bruce's innovative car designs and providing examples of the design process.

This is a rich text that you can revisit many times for different purposes. During the reading, the students will need to ask questions, make connections, find information, make inferences, and integrate ideas across the text.

Key competencies

Key competencies explored through this story include: thinking, relating to others, and managing self.

Themes and ideas

Themes and ideas explored in this story include:

- pursuing a dream
- overcoming challenges through determination, creativity, and hard work
- applying entrepreneurial skills to establish a successful business
- understanding the process of developing a technological product, including the importance of trial and error, innovation, and teamwork
- common features of biographies.

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 "Hine-o-te-Rangi: The Adventures of Jean Batten" SJ L3 Nov 2018 | *Living the Dream* SJSL L3 2017

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>

A Taste for Winning

Behind the wheel of a Cooper, Bruce developed a taste for winning. He took the chequered flag again at the 1960 Argentine Grand Prix and the 1962 Monaco Grand Prix.

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

Raised on Wheels

Bruce McLaren was born in Auckland in 1937. His father owned the McLaren Service Station, and his family lived above it in a small apartment. When he was a child, the smell of engine grease was never far away.

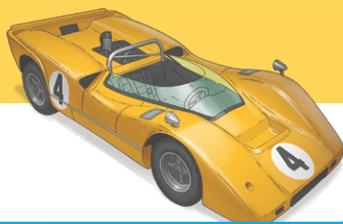
If tools went missing, the shop mechanics knew where to look

A straightforward text structure, such as a structure that follows a recognisable and clear text form

Text characteristics from the year 5 reading standard

1967 MCLAREN M6A

5 speed | 525 horsepower |
Top speed: 320 km/h



Illustrations, photographs, text boxes, diagrams, maps, charts, and graphs that clarify or extend the text and may require some interpretation

Bruce was in the lead. But French driver Maurice Trintignant was gaining on him. For a while, they were neck and neck. Bruce held his nerve and watched as the winner's chequered flag waved him through.

Bruce had just won his first Grand Prix. He was twenty-two years

Figurative and/or ambiguous language that the context helps students to understand

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

Reading standard: by the end of year 5

Making meaning: Supports and challenges

Possible supporting strategies should be implemented at the appropriate time during the reading or lesson.

VOCABULARY:

- Possibly unfamiliar words, including “gravel”, “duo”, “barely”, “tinkering”, “improvise”, “scholarship”, “ready-made”, “crowned (champion)”, “despite”, “founded”, “crates”, “nostrils”, “boasts”
- Words and phrases related to car function and design, including “speedometer”, “change gear”, “service station”, “engine grease”, “shop”, “mechanics”, “test drive”, “engineering”, “engine size”, “car body shape”, “hatch”, “grip the track”, “bodywork”, “bonnet”, “speed (gears)”, “horsepower”, “km/h”
- Names of car manufacturers and models, including “Austin”, “Cooper-Climax T51”, “Bruce McLaren Motor Racing Limited”, “Ferrari”
- Words related to motorcar racing, including “winner’s flag”, “Grand Prix”, “racing community”, “Formula One season”, “lap”, “chequered flag”, “Canadian American Challenge Cup (Can-Am)”
- Names of places and nationalities, including “Muriwai”, “Remuera”, “Europe”, “England”, “Sebring, Florida”, “Argentine”, “Monaco”, “Belgian”, “Goodwood”
- Names of people, including “Maurice Trintignant”, “Eoin Young”, “Denny Hulme”
- Colloquial phrases and idioms, many of which relate to racing, including “in his blood”, “heart hammering”, “hand in hand”, “picked up”, “[career about to] take off”, “a catch”, “neck and neck”, “held his nerve”, “waved him through”, “a taste for winning”, “took the chequered flag”, “rose to the challenge”, “pushed them to do their best”, “takes off”, “ruled the competition”, “stayed true to Bruce’s example”
- Words related to disability, some of which are out of date or seldom referred to, including “Perthes disease”, “illness”, “Wilson Home for Crippled Children”, “Bradshaw Frame”, “lasting limp”.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Some knowledge of car parts (for example, gears, speedometer, bonnet)
- Some knowledge of motor racing, for example, conventions of car races and knowledge of different models of cars
- Some understanding of the process of developing a technological product, such as a car.

Possible supporting strategies

Identify vocabulary that might be challenging for the students.

Some students may need support with words and phrases that have context-specific meanings, such as words relating to car parts and car functions. Identify car-loving students who could be used as sources of information and support for their peers. It may be useful to explore the structure of these words, for example, root words (engine, engineer) and compound words (horsepower, bodywork).

Use a Venn diagram to explain the similarities and differences between car mechanics and car engineers. Both mechanics and engineers need to understand the different parts of cars and how they work. A mechanic focuses on how to repair cars; an engineer focuses on how to design and improve them.

Before and after reading, discuss the words and expressions that have colloquial, figurative, or connotative meanings. Make sure the students understand these words and how they change in different contexts. English language learners may benefit from exploring and comparing examples of similar words in their first language.

Create a mix-and-match activity using idioms such as “neck and neck” and “held his nerve” and their definitions. If possible, include some pictures that illustrate different terms and phrases.

Using an atlas or Google Maps, help the students find the different locations referred to in the text.

Fun vocabulary games allow students to have repeated exposure to new vocabulary words. For example, Word/Picture Bingo, Twenty Questions, Charades, or Last Man Standing could be suitable games to play using the vocabulary in this text. See [FluentU](#) for descriptions on how to play these games.

For English language learners, encourage students to translate the words into their first language, with the help of their family, and discuss the meaning of each word with them. This helps students to maintain and grow their first language and to make connections between these languages.

The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction, pages 39–46, has some useful information about learning vocabulary.

Possible supporting strategies

Before reading, ask the students to share what they know about motor racing, including names of famous teams, car manufacturers, or drivers.

Watch the race highlights of a Grand Prix event on YouTube, for example, the highlights of the 2017 Monaco Grand Prix. Discuss the meanings of different flags (yellow, green, and chequered) and words associated with racing, for example, laps, record, and champion.

Discuss the different roles in developing a racing car, for example:

- designers
- mechanics
- engineers
- drivers
- sponsors.



Sounds and Words

Making meaning: Supports and challenges CONTINUED

Possible supporting strategies should be implemented at the appropriate time during the reading or lesson.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- A longer text type than many *School Journal* articles at this level (16 pages)
- Reliable, omniscient third-person narration
- The use of simple, compound, and complex sentences
- A generally chronological biography, with the exception of the introductory section, which opens with Bruce's first race
- Leaps forward in time, for example, from Bruce's early years of racing in New Zealand to his business in England
- A clear structure, including:
 - a table of contents
 - eight main headings that divide Bruce's life into chapters (some chapters include subheadings)
 - a list of famous Bruce McLaren cars, with illustrations and specifications for each car
- Text boxes that provide additional information about important races and mechanical innovations
- Visual components that support the text, such as historical photographs, illustrations, and maps
- Short paragraphs (between two and six sentences)
- The use of time connectives to organise and link ideas
- A quote.

Supporting strategies

Before reading, prompt the students to recall a biography that they have read. Ask them to talk with a partner to remind each other of the features of biographies.

Scan the text with the students so that they get a sense of how it is organised (headings, subheadings, text boxes, and images). Model how you use the headings to keep track of the main idea in each section and to locate information.

Support the students to use the table of contents to navigate the text and to locate information.

Discuss the purpose of the introductory chapter. Explore the shift in tense between the first chapter (present tense) and the rest of the book (past tense). Support students to understand the link between the opening section (The Muriwai Hill Climb, 1953) and the third section (Racing Begins). The subheading "Climbing His First Hill" is a useful point of connection between the two sections.

Have the students work in groups to create a timeline of significant events, keeping track of Bruce's age in each year and section.

Some students may benefit from text-reconstruction tasks to help them identify how texts are organised into paragraphs and how connecting words and phrases are used.

Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

Level 3 – Structure: Show a developing understanding of text structures.

Level 3 – Purposes and Audiences: Show a developing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 3 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.

TECHNOLOGY (Nature of Technology)

Level 3 – Characteristics of technology: Understand how society and environments impact on and are influenced by technology in historical and contemporary contexts and that technological knowledge is validated by successful function.

SOCIAL SCIENCES (Social Studies)

Level 3 – Understand how people remember and record the past in different ways.

Possible reading purposes

- Find out about a famous New Zealand racing-car driver and engineer.
- Identify the obstacles that Bruce McLaren overcame to become a world champion.
- Identify the features of a biographical text.

Possible writing purposes

- Describe something that you've worked hard at to achieve, including the obstacles you had to overcome.
- Research and write a biography of another famous New Zealander or of someone whom you admire.
- Create a timeline of Bruce's life.



Instructional focus – Reading

At all stages, encourage the students to vocalise their ideas and thought processes, supporting each other to justify their ideas with reasoning. Think, pair, share is a useful strategy to support peer interaction. Some students may need explicit instruction of new vocabulary before reading. Refer to the “Making meaning: Supports and challenges” section on page 2 for supporting strategies.

Introducing the text: Paving the way for successful readers

Before reading

- Introduce *In His Blood: The Bruce McLaren Story* and share the purpose for reading, briefly explaining that this is a biography of a famous New Zealand racing-car designer, engineer, and driver. Have students share what they already know about Bruce McLaren and what questions they have about him.
- Make connections to other biographies the students may have read and the types of information they tend to include, for example:
 - information about a person’s childhood and where they grew up
 - circumstances, people, or events that shaped who they are or what they did
 - key character traits of the person, supported by examples
 - obstacles they overcame
 - the path they took to achieve something
 - quotes.
- Explore the table of contents and skim and scan the text with the students to gain an overview of the story.
- Use a group discussion to draw out background knowledge about motor racing. Facilitate group discussions where students who are familiar with the sport can help other students understand the basics of Formula One and Can-Am races. Introduce words related to motor racing and watch highlights of a Grand Prix so that students are familiar with the context.
- Explore some useful strategies for dealing with unfamiliar words or ideas.

First reading

- Have the students read through the introductory section (The Muriwai Hill Climb, 1953) and discuss in pairs what they have learnt about Bruce McLaren from this section. For example, he was only fifteen when he entered his first race, he liked to win, he helped his dad to build a car, and he came from a family that knew about cars.
- Explain that the following sections provide a summary of key events in Bruce’s life, rather than a detailed account of each event. Point out that the biography jumps back in time and that from the second section, the story is in chronological order.
- Have the students ask questions and make predictions about what they will be reading, using the contents page or their knowledge of biographical texts as prompts.
- Model your own thinking as you start reading through the next section of the text, for example: *If Bruce took tools to work on his tricycle, he must have been pretty young. It sounds like his upbringing had a big influence on his love for working with machines. I wonder what else I will learn about his childhood influences and experiences.*
- Have the students work with a partner to read through subsequent sections, pausing at the end of each section (or sub-section) to discuss what they have learnt, identify which of their questions have been answered, check their predictions, and share any new questions they have.
- Have the students reread the story for enjoyment either by themselves or with a partner.
- If you are unsure about a particular student’s reading and understanding, ask them to quietly read you a few lines and have a brief discussion to establish how well that student is coping with the text challenges. This may be a good opportunity to provide specific feedback and prompt the student to articulate a specific strategy they have used.

If the students require more scaffolding

- Remind the students of strategies for working out unknown words that are particularly useful on a first reading, such as: looking for base words, recognisable chunks, and word families; using context to predict the words; reading on to check if a word makes sense. Use some of the following approaches, depending on your students’ needs:
- Assist the students to notice the use of time connectives to link ideas.
 - Encourage the students to identify with sticky notes any words that they are having difficulty with.
 - Prompt the students to make connections as they read, for example, connections with their own experiences of making things and times when they have tried to solve a problem by improvising, using trial and error, or playing around with different materials.
 - If the students struggle with a complex sentence, model how to break it down by identifying the main clause (containing the main idea) and the subordinate clause or clauses (containing the supporting details). Explain how the main clause makes sense and stands alone as a complete sentence, whereas the supporting clause does not make sense on its own. For example: “As he practised, **he kept tinkering and making improvements to the car.**” (The text in bold is the main clause, the text not in bold is the supporting clause.) Point out that in complex sentences, sometimes the main clause is in the middle or at the end of a sentence.
 - Have the students listen to the audio version of *In his Blood* as they silently read the text. Encourage them to discuss their responses with a partner.

Subsequent readings

Use subsequent readings to focus on particular themes and ideas described in the text, for example, the obstacles that Bruce McLaren had to overcome at different stages of his life and career. These subsequent readings can include students listening to the audio as they read along. Support the students through modelling, thinking aloud, prompting, and explaining to integrate ideas across the text in order to interpret those ideas and the text's themes. See suggestions for possible reading purposes on page 3.

- Give pairs of students a section of the text and a dice with the words “who”, “what”, “where”, “when”, “why”, and “how” on the sides. Have students throw the dice and, using the words on the dice, ask questions for each other that can be answered using information in the text.
 - Have the students complete a bio-cube outlining key information in the text (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/cube-30057.html>). Encourage them to share their ideas and prompt them to use the table of contents to locate information. Alternatively, have them complete a graphic organiser that outlines common features of biographies, for example, information about a person's childhood or experiences that shaped them. If necessary, model how to locate information.
- DIGITAL TOOLS**  Create a digital graphic organiser using Google Slides for students to record their notes. Developing class lists of time connectives, such as “first”, “next”, and “in 1959”, and sentence starters can also be helpful for their own writing.
- Discuss what a theme is (for example, a big idea, a life lesson, or an important message that is woven into a story). Have the students discuss in groups whether there are any important messages or life lessons in *In His Blood*.
 - Model how to or prompt the students to make inferences and think critically about a particular theme in the biography, for example, factors that contribute to success (having a dream and a positive attitude, overcoming obstacles, being able to improvise, dedication, teamwork, taking risks). Have the students work in pairs to find examples in the text that relate to this theme or to a theme of their choice.
 - Discuss ways that writers include both big events and small events to create a picture of who someone is. Have the students share details in the text that they found particularly interesting, revealing, or moving.
 - Using graphic organisers will assist students to closely read the text and organise their ideas. There are many graphic organisers available online. Select the organiser that best fits your reading purpose, such as cause and effect or compare and contrast.

Monitoring the impact of teaching

As the students read and discuss the text, take particular note of the following:

- Can the students identify and discuss the main themes of the story?
- Can they independently use strategies for:
 - working out unknown vocabulary?
 - making sense of ideas when meaning has broken down?
 - making connections to their personal experiences?
- With support, can the students link ideas and information across the text?
- Do the students transfer skills and knowledge from your modelling to their reading?
- Do the students use evidence from the text to explain their responses?

Providing feedback and supporting metacognition

Provide explicit feedback and support the students to develop their metacognition. Both strategies support students' growing independence and confidence as proficient readers.

Providing feedback

I noticed you using the photograph of the car to make sense of what the “nostrils” are, and then you cross-referenced the diagrams at the end of the story to see whether you could see other examples. Diagrams and photos provide important information for readers and using them strengthens our understanding of the article.

Supporting metacognition

How did you identify the theme of the story? What helped you to work it out?

What connections did you make to the story? How did they help you to understand it?

How did you work out some of the tricky words related to motor racing?

Suggestions for writing instruction

Students may choose to:

- research another famous New Zealander or someone whom they admire and write a biography of the person. They may like to reuse the bio-cube as a planning tool. The process could include writing interview questions for an imaginary or real interview. Encourage the students to explore a key theme they would like to focus on, for example, a person's determination.



Students could record their research and write their biographies using [Google Docs](#) to facilitate peer and teacher feedback.

- create an annotated timeline detailing significant moments from Bruce McLaren's life.



Students could use Google Drawings to create a digital timeline.

- recount a challenge that they conquered through dedication, creative thinking, or hard work.

Scaffold the students to build on their writing strengths, giving stronger support where needed and reducing it as the students become confident using and developing the strategies themselves. Help them to see the connections between their reading strategies and writing strategies (for example, implying as writer, inferring as a reader). Also, it might be helpful to revisit the particular features of the text that the author has used to relate this story. Allow plenty of time (with agreed targets) for the students to think about, plan, rework, and polish their writing.



Writing standard: by the end of year 5



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks