

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.

Keeping Our Stories Alive

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Readability level: year 4



The Learning Progression Frameworks describe significant signposts in reading and writing as students develop and apply their literacy knowledge and skills with increasing expertise from school entry to the end of year 10.

Overview

This book explores Samoan tatau in two parts: the first part is an interview with tattooist Tyla Vaeau and the second is a comic that retells how tatau came to Sāmoa. The interview with Tyla explores her Samoan culture, how she became a tufuga tā masini (electric tattoo artist), the process and practice of tattooing, and the significance of being a woman working with tatau. The comic retells the origin story of how tatau – and in particular the malu – came to Sāmoa through Tilafaigā and Taemā. The book links to the article “For the Ancestors”, published in *School Journal*, Level 3, November 2019, which recounts one woman’s experience of receiving her malu.

This is a rich text that you can revisit many times for different purposes.

Texts related by theme

“For the Ancestors” SJ L3 November 2019 | “Ngatu: Keeping the Tradition Alive” SJ L2 June 2018 | “The Sons of Ma’afu” SJ L2 October 2015 | “Afakasi Chameleon” SJ L4 May 2015 | “Tafao O!” SJ L2 November 2018 | “The Great Ordinary: The Photographs of Edith Amituanai” SJ L4 November 2016 | “Something Alive” SJ L4 June 2018

Key competencies

Key competencies explored through this text include relating to others; using language, symbols, and texts; and thinking.

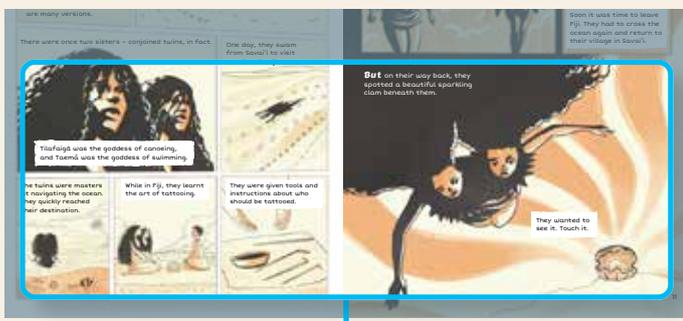
Themes and ideas

Themes and ideas explored in this text include:

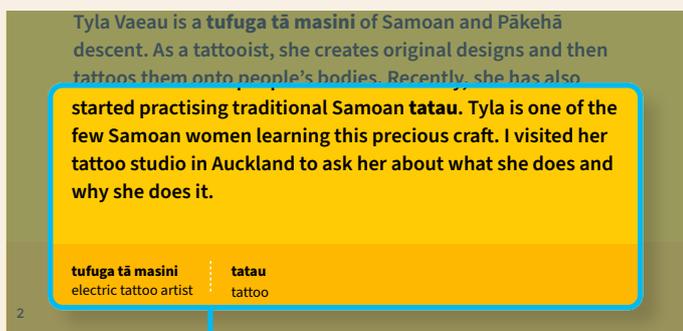
- visual storytelling
- culture, heritage, and identity
- artistic practices.

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

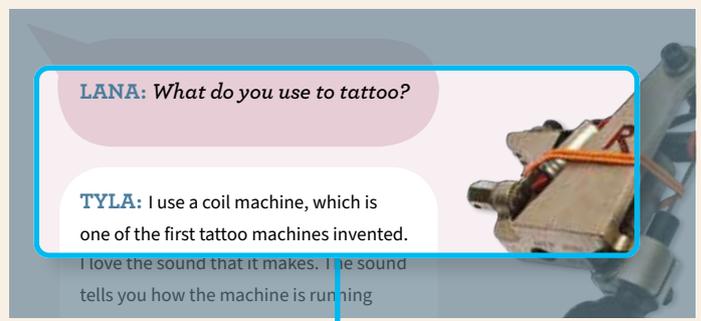
Text characteristics Opportunities for strengthening students' reading behaviours



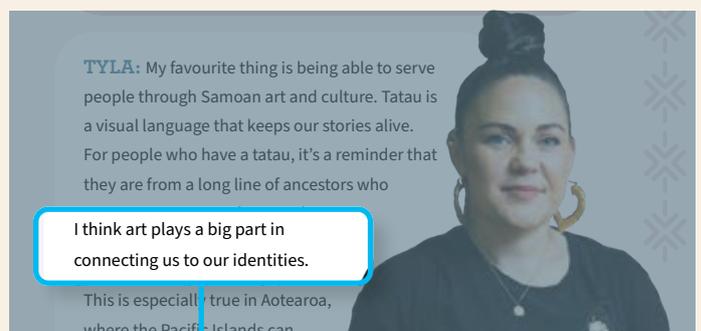
Mixed text types (a comic and an interview), requiring students to notice the different purposes for reading, make inferences, and integrate information and ideas between text types



Samoan vocabulary, supported by a glossary, requiring students to locate the meaning and integrate it with the text



An interview in a question-and-answer format, requiring students to find the answers to the questions as they read



Abstract ideas, requiring students to make inferences and connections to their own experiences to interpret the text

Making meaning: Supports and challenges

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



Go to the reading progressions frameworks “Making sense of text: vocabulary knowledge” and “Making sense of text: using knowledge of text structure and features” to find detailed illustrations of how students develop expertise and make progress in these aspects. You can find them at <https://curriculumprogressstools.education.govt.nz/lpf-tool>

VOCABULARY:

- Possibly unfamiliar words and topic-specific vocabulary, including “descent”, “practising”, “coil machine”, “rhythmic”, “continuous”, “tusks”, “represent”, “motifs”, “quantities”, “moko”, “privileged”, “identities”, “conjoined twins”, “navigating”, “destination”, “clam”, “whirlpool”, “resurfaced”
- Samoan words in bold translated in glossaries on each page: tufuga tā masini, tatau, pe’a, malu, tufuga tā tatau, ‘au, masini, tuālima, toso
- The verse of a song in Samoan: “Fai mai e tata o fafine ae le tata o tane”
- Samoan names of people and places: Su’a Sulu’ape Alaiva’a Petelo, Tilafaigā, Taemā, Savai’i
- Use of figurative language and idioms: “He became my guinea pig”.

Possible supporting strategies

Familiarise yourself with words in gagana Sāmoa (the language of Sāmoa) and how to pronounce them. Depending on the knowledge of your students, you may need to provide support for accurate pronunciation and meaning. See pasifika.tki.org.nz for help or ask staff, students, parents, or other community members.

Model how to use the glossary and how to scan the text to locate a previously explained word.

Watch this [video from Te Papa](#), which introduces students to the terms pe’a, malu, and tufuga tā tatau.

Explain what a transliteration is (machine/masini and tatau/tattoo). Note that tattoo is an English transliteration of a Polynesian word.

Support students to make connections between Samoan and te reo Māori, for example: fafine/wahine; tane/tane; alofa/aroha.

Explore the use of figurative language, which may be confusing for English language learners. Support students to use nearby information in the text to infer what the phrase means.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Some understanding of the concepts of culture and identity
- Knowledge of the process of tattooing and its significance as a cultural expression
- Some understanding that in some cultures, expertise can be handed down within families, for example, through “tatau families”
- Some understanding of symbols as a visual language
- Some understanding of the trust involved in sharing your story with someone and allowing them to tattoo your body
- Some experience of reading graphic texts
- Some understanding that there are often multiple versions of traditional stories.

Possible supporting strategies

Draw on previous activities where students have explored their identity (for example, who they are, where they are from, and what is important to them).

Before reading, ask the students to share what they know about tattooing, for example, what the process involves and the different forms of tattoos. This [Te Papa webpage](#) provides some useful background information.

Draw out students’ knowledge about the ways patterns and symbols can carry meaning, for example, kōwhaiwhai patterns.

Watch this [video](#) explaining some of the symbolism in Samoan tatau.

Encourage students to think about why people might get a tattoo, for example, people who live far away from their country of origin.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- Mixed text types (an interview and a comic)
- Some metaphors, such as “he became my guinea pig” and “the malu resurfaced”
- Some abstract ideas, such as the malu being a powerful symbol for Samoan women and the role of a tattoo artist to “translate their story, culture, and values into symbols and patterns”
- One incomplete sentence: “Touch it.”

Possible supporting strategies

Scan the text with the students so that they get a sense of how it is organised (introduction, questions and answers, glossaries, images, and a comic).

Model how you use the interview questions to keep track of the main idea in each section and to locate information.

Provide concrete examples that support students to understand abstract ideas and encourage them to demonstrate their understanding by providing examples of their own.

Prompt students’ prior knowledge of the graphic-novel format. Check that they know how to read the panels in a left-to-right, zigzag direction.



Sounds and Words

Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (READING):

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

ENGLISH (READING):

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

ENGLISH (READING):

Level 3 – Processes and strategies: Integrate sources of information, processes, and strategies with developing confidence to identify, form, and express ideas.

SOCIAL SCIENCES:

Level 3 – Social Studies: Understand how cultural practices vary but reflect similar purposes.

SOCIAL SCIENCES:

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

THE ARTS – VISUAL ARTS:

Level 3 – Understanding the Arts in Context: Investigate the purpose of objects and images from past and present cultures and identify the contexts in which they were or are made, viewed, and valued.

Possible reading purposes

- To find out what a tattoo artist does and why she does it
- To find out about an important Samoan cultural expression
- To explore connections between symbols, storytelling, and remembering the past
- To interpret words and images in a comic to learn a traditional story of how tatau became part of Samoan culture.

Possible writing purposes

- To describe a practice or experience that is important in your culture
- To explain factors that shape who someone is and what they do
- To explain how cultural expressions and traditions connect the past and the present
- To retell a traditional story in comic form.

The Literacy Learning Progressions: Meeting the Reading and Writing Demands of the Curriculum describe the literacy related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students need to draw on in order to meet the demands of the curriculum.



The Writing Hub

Instructional focus – Reading

Use this text to develop the students' metacognition. At all stages, encourage the students to vocalise their ideas and thought processes, supporting each other to justify their ideas with reasoning.



Go to the reading progressions frameworks “Acquiring and using information and ideas in informational texts”, “Reading for literary experience”, and “Making sense of text: reading critically” to find detailed illustrations of how students develop expertise and make progress in these aspects. You can find them at <https://curriculumprogressiontools.education.govt.nz/lpf-tool>

Introducing the text: Paving the way for successful readers

Before reading

- Introduce *Keeping Our Stories Alive*. Have the students share their ideas with a partner about what the title might mean.
- Have the students skim and scan the book to identify the two text types and to make connections between them based on their titles (and the title of the book) and visual features.
- If necessary, clarify the question-and-answer format in the first section.
- Use group discussion to draw out background knowledge about tattooing and particular symbols that have cultural significance.
- Explain to the students that they will encounter a number of words in Samoan. Prompt their prior knowledge about how to use a glossary.
- Explore some useful strategies for dealing with other unfamiliar words or ideas.

Tyla Vaeau: Storyteller

- Introduce “Tyla Vaeau: Storyteller” and share the purpose for reading, explaining that this is an interview of a tattoo artist who has Samoan and Pākehā heritage.
- Prompt students' prior knowledge of written interviews, including features such as a question-and-answer format, a first-person perspective, and a conversational tone.

How Tatau Came to Sāmoa

- Introduce “How Tatau Came to Sāmoa” and share the purpose for reading, explaining that this is a legend about how tatau was introduced to Sāmoa retold in the form of a comic.
- Prompt students' prior knowledge about the layout of a comic and, if necessary, demonstrate how to read the story in a zigzag pattern.

First reading

Have the students read through the introductory section on page 2 to identify the person being interviewed and the focus of the interview. Have them make predictions about what they will learn and encourage them to share any questions that they have.

Have the students work with a partner to read the interview, pausing at the end of each section (or sub-section) to discuss what they have learnt, to identify which of their questions have been answered, to check their predictions, and to share any new questions they have.

Have the students discuss the interview with a partner. *Was there some information you expected to find but didn't? Is there something you still want to know?*

Direct students to read “How Tatau Came to Sāmoa”, asking them to identify connections between the comic and the interview. This could be done after the students have read and discussed the interview or at another time.

If students require more scaffolding

Remind students of strategies that are particularly useful on a first reading, such as reading on, rereading, and making connections with their prior knowledge. Remember to give students enough processing time to answer questions before moving on. Use some of the following approaches, depending on students' needs:

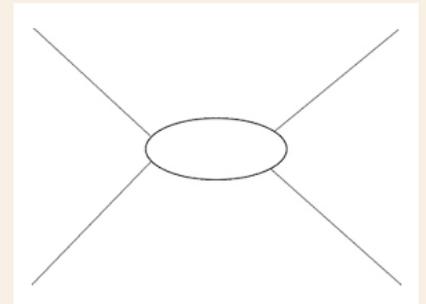
- Model making predictions about what you might learn from the interview.
- Prompt the students to make connections as they read, for example, connections with the idea of symbols and how they tell stories. If necessary, prompt the students' thinking with questions. *Can you think of a symbol that has special meaning to you or your whānau? If you had a tattoo, what would you want it to represent? Why?*
- Support the students to use their knowledge of text types to identify the layout of a graphic text.

Subsequent readings

Use subsequent readings to focus on particular themes and ideas described in the text. These subsequent readings can include students listening to the audio as they read along. Support the students to integrate ideas across the text through modelling, thinking aloud, prompting, and explaining. They should then be able to interpret those ideas and the text's themes. See suggestions for possible reading purposes on page 3.

Symbols and storytelling

- Prompt a discussion about different cultural or religious symbols that the students are familiar with, including their meaning and origin. Discuss the stories behind these symbols and how they show that something is valued or significant.
- Discuss ways that cultural expressions such as stories, artworks, festivals, or special days connect the past with the present, providing concrete examples from your own life.
- Consider using a 4-3-2 task. These tasks help English language learners to develop fluency, organise their ideas, and reuse vocabulary. Students work in pairs, sitting in two circles (with one circle inside the other) opposite their partner. Student A has four minutes to share information about the topic being discussed with their partner. Student B listens without interrupting. Next, student A moves to a new partner, and they have three minutes to share. Finally, they move to a third partner and have two minutes to share. Students then swap roles and the process is repeated.
- Have students reread Tyla's answer to the final question and share their ideas about:
 - what Tyla means when she calls tatau a visual language
 - ways that tatau keeps stories alive.
- Have students read “How Tatau Came to Sāmoa”, giving them time to enjoy the illustrations and the rhythm and lyricism of the story.
- “How Tatau Came to Sāmoa” would be suitable for a strip story task, which provides opportunities for students to reread and reuse vocabulary while co-operatively reconstructing the story. This type of activity also helps students, especially new learners of English, to notice text connectives and grammatical features. Once they have reconstructed the story, the students can use the illustrations as prompts to retell the story to a partner. Likewise, they can use them to write a retelling of the story.
- Return to the discussion about the titles of the interview, comic, and book. Prompt the students to make connections between the two text types. *What connections can you see between the comic and the interview? How does the theme of storytelling connect the two texts? Why have these two texts been put together?*
- Co-operative tasks such as “placemat consensus” can help students to organise and formulate their answers to questions while learning from each other.
 1. The students are divided into groups. On a large piece of paper, one member of the group draws a central oval and divides the surrounding area into sections that correspond with the number of group members. Each group member is allocated a section.
 2. One member writes the discussion question in the middle of the oval.
 3. Each person writes their answers in their section of the placemat.
 4. The students then compare and discuss their answers. They formulate what they think would be the best answer by taking something from everyone's ideas and writing it in the oval.



The relationship between heritage and culture

- Lead a discussion that explores understandings about culture. Clarify that culture isn't just about food, clothes, music, or art – it involves everyday routines, practices, values, and beliefs that families pass down through generations.
- Explain that 'āiga (family), tautua (service), gafa (ancestry), and alofa (love) are four important values in fa'a-Sāmoa (Samoan culture). Direct students to read the interview again, looking for evidence of these in the text. *How do these values influence Tyla (what she does and why she does it)?*
- Give students the task of talking to their parents and/or grandparents about skills, knowledge, values, attitudes, or beliefs that are passed down within their whānau. Have students share an example of their heritage with a partner or within a small group. They may want to bring a cultural artefact or create an illustration that reflects that knowledge and share it with their partner.

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 breaks 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. An example of each is provided below.

Providing feedback

Being able to support your ideas with evidence from the text made your explanations stronger. You made good use of the questions in the interview to locate the information that you needed.

Supporting metacognition

The book uses an interview and a comic to provide information about Samoan tatau. What connections are there between the two texts? How do they work together to help us understand tatau?

Suggestions for writing instruction



Go to the writing progressions frameworks “Creating texts to communicate current knowledge and understanding” and “Writing meaningful text: using knowledge of text structure and features” to find detailed illustrations of how students develop expertise and make progress in these aspects. You can find them at <https://curriculumprogressstools.education.govt.nz/lpf-tool>

Students may choose to:

- interview someone about what they do and why they do it, using *Tyla Vaeau: Storyteller* as a model. (Check that English language learners can form appropriate question stems.)
- research another form of visual storytelling, for example, whakairo (carving), tapa cloth, kōwhaiwai, or tā moko. Encourage the students to explain the meanings of different symbols and motifs.
- write about a family tradition, story, or belief that is handed down in their whānau and why they think this is important or valuable.
- create a tattoo design that relates to their own life and write about what it represents.
- retell a story in the form of a comic.



Students could use [Google Slides](#) to create their comic. The following YouTube video explains how: <https://youtu.be/dcTbckKjvpM>

Scaffold the students to build on their writing strengths, giving stronger support where needed and reducing it as the students become confident in 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. Allow plenty of time (with agreed targets) for the students to think about, plan, rework, and polish their writing.



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks