



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. This teacher support material (TSM) describes the opportunities in “Seashells” for students to develop this expertise.

## Overview

“Seashells” provides information about the shells that can be found on New Zealand beaches. It includes intriguing facts and photographs. This article is linked to two other pieces in this journal: “Super Shells”, which describes some ways that people use shells, and “Beach Buddy”, a craft activity.

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

There is a PDF of this text and an audio version as an MP3 file at [www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz](http://www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz)

## Related texts

Fiction: *Treasure from the Sea* (RTR Purple); *Wheke* (RTR Gold)

Non-fiction: *Camouflage* (RTR shared); *Undersea Gardens* (RTR Gold); “Flying Fungi” (SJ L2 Feb 2012); “Down the Drain” (*Taking Action*, Connected L2 2017)

## Text characteristics

“Seashells” includes the following features that help students develop the reading behaviours expected at Gold and build their knowledge of the text forms and features of non-fiction.

The structure of the text as a report with an introduction, a series of main points, and a conclusion

Visual language features, including headings, bullet points, photographs, captions, a text box, and a glossary

A mix of explicit and implicit content, including information that may be new, requiring students to make connections to their prior knowledge to make inferences, track information, and identify main points

Some words and phrases that may be unfamiliar, including subject-specific vocabulary (for example, “creatures”, “predators”, “tuatua”, “oysters”, “mussels”, “scallops”, “limpets”, “Turban” “spiral”, “molluscs”, “ocean currents”, “scientist”, “studies”, “carrier”, “camouflage”, “juicy”, “tropical”, “polished”, “substance”, “nacre”, “jewellery”, “filter”), requiring students to use their processing systems

Information organised in paragraphs and the use of a variety of sentence structures, requiring students to attend to punctuation, pronouns, and other linking words and phrases to clarify connections between ideas



Language features typical of non-fiction:

- precise descriptive language, including extended noun phrases and qualifiers (for example, “Many”, “some”, “almost all”, “not all”)
- the use of examples
- subject-specific compound words (“seashells”, “shellfish”, “seagulls”, “shipworm”, “driftwood”, “seaweed”, “seawater”)
- a glossary

## Cross-curriculum links

### English (Reading)

Level 2 – Processes and strategies: Selects and reads texts for enjoyment and personal fulfilment.

Level 2 – Structure: Recognises an increasing range of text forms and differences between them.

### Science (Living World)

Levels 1 and 2 – Life processes: Recognise that all living things have certain requirements so they can stay alive.

Levels 1 and 2 – Ecology: Recognise that living things are suited to their particular habitat.

For further information about the science content in this article, see Building Science Concepts, Book 21: *Life between the Tides* or go to the online [BSC concept overview](#).



The New Zealand Curriculum

## Suggested reading purpose

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

- To find information about seashells
- To think about why shells are special

## 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 goals listed below link to the descriptions of reading behaviours in *The Literacy Learning Progressions* and the *Learning Progression Frameworks*. **Select from and adapt** them according to your students’ strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 7).

This text provides opportunities for students, over several readings, to:

- use text and visual language features to identify and track information (**summarise**)
- **make connections** between information in the article and their prior knowledge to **make inferences**
- **ask questions** and look for or think about possible answers
- **monitor** their reading and, when something is unclear, take action to solve the problem, for example, by checking further sources of information, rereading, and/or reading on.



Sounds and Words



The Literacy Learning Progressions

## Introducing the text

Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that your introduction to the text is effective in building or activating their prior knowledge and providing appropriate support for a successful first reading. Several options are provided below for you to **select from and adapt**. A short video on the importance of introducing the text is available at <https://vimeo.com/142446572>

For English language learners, you could talk through the article to introduce key vocabulary (in English and in their first language if possible) and provide support with text features that may be unfamiliar. You can find further information about features of texts that may need support at [ELLP](#).

- The day before reading, you could have the students work together to complete an anticipatory reading guide like the one on the right. Use the completed guides to generate discussion and questions when introducing the text.
- Alternatively, read the title and make connections to the students’ experiences and knowledge of collecting shells and shellfish. If possible, have some shells for them to examine and discuss.
- Together, browse through the article, focusing on the visual language features (including the headings). Prompt the students to make connections to what they already know and to predict what they will find out.

|   | Agree | Disagree |
|---|-------|----------|
| Seashells all look the same.  |       |          |
| Shells are very common on New Zealand beaches.                      |       |          |
| Some New Zealand beaches do not have shells.                        |       |          |
| Sea creatures once lived inside shells.                             |       |          |
| Shells found on beaches mostly have sea creatures inside.           |       |          |
| All shells have two halves.   |       |          |
| Shellfish are fish.   |       |          |
| Shellfish have bones.   |       |          |
| All shells are colourful.   |       |          |
| Write something that you are wondering about New Zealand seashells: |       |          |

- Feed in vocabulary that may be new. You could write some key topic words on a chart and record the students’ ideas about what the words mean and why they might be important in a text about seashells. Leave room to add further information after reading.
- Set a reading purpose together. Share the learning goal(s). Give the students sticky notes to mark questions or ideas that arise as they read or to note aspects they want to come back to.

## Reading the text

For the first reading, encourage the students to read the text by themselves, intervening only if it's clear a student needs help. Much of the processing that they do at this level is "inside their heads" and may not be obvious until the discussion afterwards. There will be many opportunities to provide support with word-solving and comprehension on subsequent readings.

### Student behaviours

*Examples of the sorts of behaviours (often overlapping and developed over several readings) that will help students achieve their learning goal(s).*

#### **The students use text and visual language features to identify and track information.**

- They use the headings to clarify what each section is about.
- They make connections between the body text and the captioned photographs on page 3 to clarify their understanding of the various types of shells.
- On page 4, they use linking words such as "but", "also", "and", "not", and "too" to clarify their ideas about what molluscs are and are not.
- On page 5, they use the speech marks and the phrase "he says" to clarify that the comments are from Hamish Spencer, not the author.
- They identify the two main points on page 8 (that shellfish are important and that there are ways we can help keep them safe) and use the bullet points to track the supporting information.

#### **They make connections between information in the article and their prior knowledge to make inferences.**

- They make connections to their own experiences of shells and shellfish.
- They build on information in the text about how shells protect shellfish to infer other possible dangers.
- They make connections to their own interests to imagine (visualise) why Hamish chose to become a shell scientist.
- They use the page 7 description to visualise the process of creating a pearl.

#### **They ask questions and look for or think about possible answers.**

- For example, they might wonder about:
  - the things a shell scientist does
  - why a pāua shell is bright on the inside
  - whether other shellfish make pearls
  - how shells end up on beaches.

#### **They demonstrate self-monitoring and problem solving.**

- They use a range of word-solving strategies. For example:
  - they break words into chunks or syllables ("pred-a-tors", "tu-a-tu-a", "lim-pets")
  - they refer to the glossary to clarify the meanings of words in bold print
  - to clarify the meaning of "bivalves", they make connections between key phrases ("once two shells joined together", "still joined", "broken away"), their knowledge of the prefix "bi" as in "bicycle", and their own experiences of finding shells.
- They reread and check punctuation and linking words to clarify meaning, for example, "A shipworm has a body that looks like a worm, but with two small shells at one end. It [the shipworm] uses these [the two small shells] to drill holes in driftwood".
- They mark words or phrases they are not sure of or aspects of interest that they want to come back to.

### Deliberate acts of teaching

*How you can support individual students (if needed).*

- Remind the students of strategies they can use for solving unfamiliar words (for example, looking for the biggest known word chunk and applying their knowledge of letters, sounds, and word structure) and for clarifying meaning (rereading or reading on and thinking about the overall meaning of the sentence or paragraph, checking the photographs, searching for definitions nearby, noticing bold print for words explained in the glossary, and making connections to their prior knowledge). Provide specific support as necessary, for example, with the shellfish names.
- Prompt the students to note things they are not sure about or that are of particular interest, to discuss after the reading. Reassure them that when reading non-fiction, they may sometimes need to read more slowly, reread parts, and/or check aspects such as photographs or captions to build their understanding.

### Discussing and rereading the text

You can revisit this article several times, providing opportunities for the students to build comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. **Select from and adapt** the following suggestions according to your students' needs and responses to the reading. Some of the suggestions overlap, and several can be explored further as after-reading activities.  For some suggestions, you may find it helpful to project the PDF of the article so that you can zoom in on relevant sections.

- Remind the students of the reading purpose. Refer back to the anticipatory guide, if you used one, to clarify any queries. *What helped you find that out?*
- Ask the students to think, pair, and share one or two examples each of new words they noticed as they were reading. Together, discuss their meanings and how they are supported in the text. If topic vocabulary was a focus when introducing the text, update the chart.
- Use the headings as a guide to identifying the main points in each section. Starting with page 2, work together to highlight key words or phrases and then compose one or two summary sentences (for example, "There are lots of shells on New Zealand beaches. Most shells were once homes for shellfish."). Record the headings and summary sentences on a chart. The students could work in pairs to identify and record the main points on subsequent pages (one page per pair) either now or as an after-reading activity.

- Prompt the students to think critically about the ways the author has made the information in this article easy to follow, for example:
  - having a clear title and headings
  - using photographs with captions, a text box, an explanation in parentheses, and a glossary to provide extra information
  - using “you” and “we” to remind students of what they already know about shells
  - including lots of examples.
- Have the students reread the article, stopping to discuss points of interest, including aspects they have marked with sticky notes. For example:
  - questions they thought of as they were reading. Explain that reading non-fiction texts often leads to asking (and researching) further questions. Discuss ways of finding answers to questions that are not answered in the article.
  - the structure of the report. Support the students to identify the introduction (page 2) and the headings that show the focus of each section. Discuss how the conclusion (page 8) focuses on what readers can do to save shells.
  - the precise descriptive language to help readers understand and visualise information, for example:
    - » the subject-specific compound words. Discuss how each component word contributes to the overall meaning.
    - » noun phrases (often containing an adjective), for example, “smooth shells”, “flat shells”, “curly shells”, “low tide”, “shell scientist”, “rocky pools”, and most of the photograph captions. Support the students to create noun phrases that describe the size, shape, colour, pattern, texture, or unique features of some of the shells shown in the photographs. See also After reading.
    - » the precise definitions of the words in the glossary.
  - the use of pronouns to link ideas. Provide support, in particular for English language learners, by tracking some examples together, such as on page 6, where the pronouns “their”, “they”, and “them” in the first paragraph all refer to “shellfish”.
  - how the students worked out (or tried to work out) unfamiliar words or phrases. Provide support as necessary. You could draw attention to the prefixes or suffixes in “bivalves”, “unusual”, “colourful”, “beautiful”, “protection”, and “valuable”. Together, identify the root words and discuss the impact of the prefix or suffix on their meanings. (Explain that “valve” in “bivalves” means a hinged shell.) See also After reading.
- Note any aspects you might want to follow up on later, perhaps as a mini-lesson or as an after-reading activity.

## After reading: Practice and reinforcement

After-reading tasks should arise from your monitoring of the students’ needs during the lesson and provide purposeful practice and reinforcement. Where possible, make links to other texts, including texts generated by the students, and to the wider literacy programme (for example, oral language, writing, handwriting, and word games and activities) and other curriculum areas. **Select from and adapt** these suggestions, according to the needs of your students.

For English language learners, [SELLIPS](#) and [ELIP](#) also have ideas for purposeful and relevant tasks.

- The students can build their comprehension and fluency by rereading the article while listening to the [audio version](#).

Audio versions are particularly supportive for English language learners because, as well as clarifying pronunciation, they provide good models of the prosodic features of English, such as intonation, stress, and phrasing.

- Ask the students to write three facts that they found most interesting and explain why. Alternatively, they could continue the summarising activity started earlier.
- Encourage the students to talk with family members about their experiences of finding and/or collecting shells, including shells from other countries. Enjoy sharing unusual discoveries.
- You could support the students to find more information about types of shells by using this [downloadable Shell Key chart](#). They could use the chart to sort shells or photographs of shells, or they could match shell names to photographs. The students could also draw on their research to write information cards or quiz questions.  They could use Google Slides for these activities.

- Write some of the subject-specific vocabulary on cards and ask the students to work in pairs to write definitions, referring to the text to clarify meaning and using the style of the definitions in the glossary as a guide. Alternatively, you could give them word cards and definition cards to match up (some examples are provided below). The students could use the subject-specific words in sentences.

| Word cards     | Definition cards                         |
|----------------|--|
| seashell       | once a home for a sea creature           |
| bivalve        | two shells joined together               |
| mollusc        | a creature with a soft body and no bones |
| ocean currents | sea water moving in a certain direction  |
| land snail     | a mollusc that lives on land             |
| nacre          | a shiny substance made by oysters        |
| pearl          | a shiny, valuable jewel                  |

- Provide some shells for the students to examine, perhaps with a magnifying glass. The students could sort and sketch the shells and add descriptions or labels. Prompt them to use vocabulary from the text as well as their own ideas. Alternatively, you could give the students cards with noun phrases (for example, “small shells”, “shells with rough edges”, “bivalves”, “spiral shells”) and have them identify specific shells or groups of shells that match the phrases.

- Explore some of the prefixes and suffixes in the article. Begin with the more familiar affixes “un” and “ful”. Work through some examples together, discussing their meanings and identifying the root words, then have the students work with further examples, including words not in the text. To provide some “stretch”, you could have them explore words with the affixes “bi” (bivalve, bicycle, biplane, bilingual), “tion” (protection, explanation, education, reflection), or “able” (valuable, breakable, likeable, recyclable).

| Example | Meaning   | Root word |
|---------|-----------|-----------|
| unusual | not usual | usual     |
| unhappy |           |           |
| untrue  |           |           |
| unwise  |           |           |
| untidy  |           |           |

| Example   | Meaning        | Root word |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| colourful | full of colour | colour    |
| beautiful |                |           |
| careful   |                |           |
| cheerful  |                |           |
| wonderful |                |           |