

Writing in social sciences, level 2

Traditions and taonga

Overview

This resource provides examples of purposeful curriculum learning within the social sciences context of traditions and taonga, but the primary focus is on the planning and teaching of the writing skills and knowledge that support students' learning in this context. Refer to Teaching Writing across the Curriculum in Years 4–6 for more information about using writing across the curriculum.

These materials use three texts from the Ministry of Education's instructional series to support the curriculum learning and the writing tasks. The selected texts have themes that relate to the context of traditions and taonga.



School Journal
Part 1 Number 3
2007



School Journal
Part 2 Number 4
2009



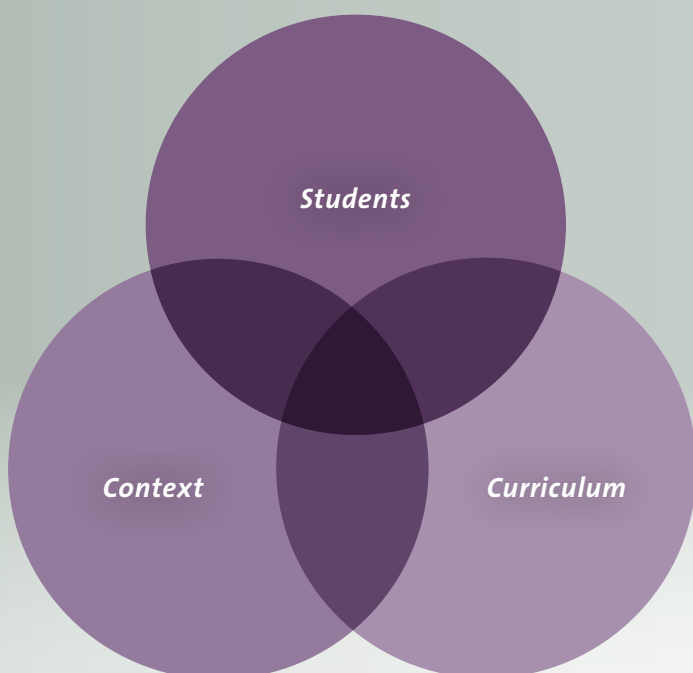
School Journal
Part 1 Number 3
2010

Three aspects of planning

When planning, consider:

- the big ideas that underpin the New Zealand Curriculum and the big ideas contained in the social sciences curriculum
- the relevance of the topics and contexts for your students
- the learning strengths and needs of your students.

These three aspects of planning (curriculum, context, and the students' learning strengths and needs in the particular focus areas – see the diagram below) are integral and reciprocal. They naturally overlap and so learning tasks and activities address all three aspects. It is the point where the planning starts that may vary.



Students' literacy strengths and needs

Writing

What skills and knowledge do my students bring to the learning?
What support will my students need to:

- create relevant content?
- use text structures and language features appropriate to their purpose and audience?
- select and use tools to plan and organise ideas and information to meet their writing purpose?
- use vocabulary that clearly conveys ideas, experiences, and information?

Context (for inquiry and learning)

Traditions and taonga

Big idea: All families have traditions and taonga.

- Understanding our own heritage helps us to value the heritage of other people.
- Families express and pass on their culture and heritage through their traditions and stories.
- Special items are regarded as treasures by families and cultures for many reasons.

Curriculum

Social sciences

- Social studies: Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people's customs, traditions, and values.

Texts that support the theme of traditions and taonga

School Journal, Part 1 Number 3, 2007 – “Family Treasures” (article)

Relevant themes:

- Families express and pass on their culture and heritage through their traditions and stories.
- Special items are treasured by people for all sorts of reasons.

School Journal, Part 2 Number 4, 2009 – “Naming the Baby” (story)

Relevant theme:

- Families express and pass on their culture and heritage through their traditions and stories.

School Journal, Part 1 Number 3, 2010 – “Nia’s Hair” (story)

Relevant themes:

- Special items are treasured by people for all sorts of reasons.
- Families express and pass on their culture and heritage through their traditions and stories.

Texts related by theme

School Journal, Part 2 Number 1, 2006 – “Great-grandpa” (story)

School Journal, Part 3 Number 1, 2009 – “The Bittern” (story)

Overview of social sciences concepts

Concepts are embedded in all the social sciences achievement objectives across the four conceptual strands of the New Zealand Curriculum. They are an essential part of teaching and learning in social sciences.

For information about social inquiry in the social sciences curriculum and the four conceptual strands, see: ssol.tki.org.nz/social_studies_years_1_10/teaching_and_learning/effective_teaching_in_social_studies/building_conceptual_understandings

Texts	Text features and structure	Supporting strategies
<i>School Journal 1.3.07 – “Family Treasures”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure comprises seven separate “stories” from children about family treasures • Question in the first paragraph engages the reader • Use of past verb forms to describe events in the past • Use of present verb forms to describe characteristics and routines • Use of languages other than English (for example, the various terms for family members) • Photographs that convey meaning as well as illustrate the article • Footnotes. 	<p>Draw the students’ attention to the photographs and the text boxes showing the names of the people. Discuss the purpose of the text boxes and identify reasons why writers use text boxes for adding extra information.</p> <p>Deconstruct one page, pointing out the features – for example, first person, use of tense, main ideas. Create a graphic organiser that includes the main ideas or types of information (what it is, what it looks like, what it’s used for, and so on) and the associated language features.</p> <p>Co-construct success criteria for the students’ own descriptions of family treasures.</p>
<i>School Journal 2.4.09 – “Naming the Baby”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straightforward narrative (covers a short period of time, has a single setting, presents a single problem and its solution) • Extensive use of dialogue that reflects familiar family behavioural patterns • Note about naming practices • Amount of dialogue (twelve characters who speak), which requires the reader to be able to follow who is speaking. 	<p>Share with the students how your name was chosen by your parents (if you know). Support them to each tell the story of their name. Encourage them to write about it in a notebook.</p> <p>Explore the use of story to portray important concepts about family traditions.</p>
<i>School Journal 1.3.10 – “Nia’s Hair”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nia’s internal dialogue (marked by the verbs “thought” and “wondered”) • Movement of the story through different time settings in the past • Verb forms and signal words that help the reader to follow the sequence of events • Use of simile (“she looked like a flower vase”; “Nia felt as if Grandma was all around her”) and metaphor (“Your hair is your beauty in life”). 	<p>Provide a variety of planning frameworks or graphic organisers for organising ideas and information.</p> <p>Discuss the uses of various organisers (including online organisers) and how to choose the appropriate one for a selected task.</p> <p>Show the students how to gather and record information in phrases and key words. If possible, ensure that the graphic organisers for reading and gathering information are clearly linked to the writing that the students are going to do.</p>

Instructional Focus: Writing

Begin by describing for your students the sort of writing they will be doing to support their learning. As a way of creating an authentic learning experience, students could then share these texts with the wider community by using an online publishing solution – for example, a wiki or a Google website.

Three learning processes

The writing tasks described below relate to three learning processes:

1. finding and recording information
2. exploring values and perspectives
3. considering responses and decisions.

1. Finding and recording information

Support your students to gather information about practices that are special to their cultural groups and families. Begin by focusing on their family practice and/or cultural practices, or on items that are special. Help them to pose questions; gather, record, and organise their information so that they can see similarities and differences; and start forming conclusions about how culture and heritage are passed on.

Writing demands	Prompts to support planning
<p>The writing demands related to finding and recording information include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generating relevant questions • using key words and phrases to make notes in response to questions • creating short paragraphs to develop a particular point of interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do my students know about summarising information and recording key points in response to their questions? • What support do they need (including help with linguistic and cultural knowledge) to find and summarise key ideas and to organise and link these ideas? • How can I best scaffold my students to do this? • How can I support my students to explore the topic in their first language (if it is not English)?

Task: Students think about and record ideas and information

Students Possible responses to the task	Teacher Possible deliberate acts of teaching												
<p>Students record information about a family treasure.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><u>What is our family treasure?</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;"><u>What is it?</u></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>A photo of Koro He was a soldier - WW2.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><u>Why is it special?</u></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>He got a medal for being brave He is dead He is my Dad's grandad He is tipuna We are proud of him I have the same name Tipuna are important</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><u>Where is it?</u></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Hanging in Nan's hallway</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><u>What does it look like?</u></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Faded brown Old fashioned Smiling face Fancy frame</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><u>What happened to it?</u></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Glass brok in an earthgake Fixed now Nan looks after it</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>What is our family treasure?</u>		<u>What is it?</u>	<i>A photo of Koro He was a soldier - WW2.</i>	<u>Why is it special?</u>	<i>He got a medal for being brave He is dead He is my Dad's grandad He is tipuna We are proud of him I have the same name Tipuna are important</i>	<u>Where is it?</u>	<i>Hanging in Nan's hallway</i>	<u>What does it look like?</u>	<i>Faded brown Old fashioned Smiling face Fancy frame</i>	<u>What happened to it?</u>	<i>Glass brok in an earthgake Fixed now Nan looks after it</i>	<p>Explain how to record responses, thoughts, and questions about the personal connections the students make.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide what you already know and what you want to find out about a treasure in your family, about your family traditions, or about your own culture. <p>Model how to use writing to record ideas. Use the “think aloud” technique to demonstrate how to record and describe information. Clarify for your students what they will do with their notes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When I talk to someone from my family about our traditions or treasures, I can note down any key points about a tradition or treasure – like names, times, and places. I will use these notes to write my description.</i> • <i>When I write, I need to include what the treasure is, what it looks like, where it comes from, how it is used, how old it is, and why it is special.</i> • <i>To help my readers picture it in their minds and make sense of what I am describing, I will need to give them enough details and put the events in the right order.</i> <p>To provide more support, ask the students to describe their treasure orally to a partner before writing. Discuss some of the language they will need (for example, verb forms and adjectives). Note and analyse examples of these in the reading and make explicit links to them when planning the writing. Model how to use a graphic organiser (possibly the one the students used to record information from their reading) to take notes when planning their writing.</p>
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What the writing shows

The student has selected relevant information and recorded key points and details in order to create a more complete description of the family treasure. Specific nouns (such as “Koro”, “soldier”, “medal”, and “tipuna”) and the adjectival phrases “faded brown” and “old fashioned” provide more precise information about the taonga.

Students describe a family tradition

What is our family tradition?

I asked mum and she said our family traditon is that we always go to visit my antys grave. Her name was Nina and she died a long time ago, but she was my mums only sister. We take flouers and we sit on the grass and sometimes we feel sad. Mum picks the weeds from the grave so it looks tidedy and nice. It is special because we never forget her.

What the writing shows

The student writes about a family tradition by describing the family’s actions and providing specific details about these actions, such as “always go to visit my auntys grave”, “mums only sister”, “take flouers”, and “feel sad”. The student uses “always”, “never forget”, and “It is special because” to emphasise the sense of tradition.

Model how the students can give an oral description using their notes. Provide a speaking frame for students who need extra support.

- *I have brought my ... I will tell you something about it and say why it is special in our family.*

Explain the use of first-person narrative.

- *In this example, we can see the writer has used the words “my” and “our”. These pronouns tell us that it is written in the first person. Check your writing and see where you have used names and where you have used pronouns.*

Model how to use a strategy to plan a description. In a shared writing session, show the students how to develop their notes into sentences. For example, with the subject “old violin”, ask the questions needed to extend the idea into a sentence.

- What is it? Who owns it? (“Our family has an old violin.”)

Prompt the students to focus their writing on explaining why the item is important to their family rather than giving a detailed description of the item. Keep stories short – one or two paragraphs only. Develop criteria to support the students to analyse their own writing and that of others.

Give feedback that reinforces the students’:

- relevant content choices in response to the question
- inclusion of specific details that describe and explain social studies concepts
- use of precise language for clarity, precision, and accuracy when describing and explaining taonga and traditions.

2. Exploring values and perspectives

When exploring values and perspectives, select the key questions for the students to focus on as a class and help them choose their own questions for investigation. Ensure that the focus is on the values and different perspectives that are revealed through family stories. It may be appropriate for the students to develop questions to ask family members or people in their community in order to find out more about their traditions and taonga and why they valued and retained them.

Writing demands	Prompts to support planning
<p>The writing demands when exploring values and perspectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recording and collating relevant information • communicating understandings to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sort of activities will help the students to explore values and perspectives? • Am I clear about how to support the students to understand the values and perspectives of their own traditions or stories about particular taonga? • What do I need to do to ensure that they can develop questions for their own inquiry? • What sort of graphic organisers (including digital) will help them to record and collate their information?

Task: Students make sense of ideas and information

Students

Possible responses to the task

Students collate information in response to questions.

Questions	What we found out
Why do people have traditions around hair cutting?	Some pacific cultures have hair-cutting ceremony for children at a certain age. It goes back to early times when children and adults had different jobs and roles in the village. They have different ages for hair-cutting these days. It used to be when children were young, but now it doesn't matter so much.

What the writing shows

These four sentences include items of information chosen and recorded in response to the question. Each sentence contains a different piece of information. Descriptive vocabulary is specific to the topic of hair-cutting – for example, “hair-cutting ceremonies”, “a certain age”, and “jobs and roles”. The use of sentences and phrases such as “It goes back to early times when”, “these days”, and “It used to be ... but now” in the content chosen shows a shift in the purpose of the ceremony from the past to the present day.

Questions	My family	Sam's family
What are our traditions for eating?	All the kids we eat kai before the groups	He eats dinner with his mum and his dad and his sister
What are our traditions for Birthdays?	We can choose what to have for our birthday tea	He has a party at his house and I go to it
What are our traditions for weddings?	We wear special clothes We go to church We have lots of food	Sam has special clothes too They have lots of food too. Usually they go to church
What are our traditions for when a baby is born?	Mum and Dad choosed our names.	Sams mother asked her mother if she could have Sam's name.

What the writing shows

The student has organised the information and used the format provided to make comparisons between their family's practices and those of a friend's family. Words such as “All ... before” and “He eats ... with” are deliberately chosen to emphasise the point of comparison. The student also shows similarity by using precise terms such as “too” and “usually”. Relational and modal verbs (“We can”; “He has”) are also used to make a comparison.

Teacher

Possible deliberate acts of teaching

Prompt the students to express prior knowledge about family traditions or taonga; support the students to find the common factors, to discover the “theme”, and to develop understanding of the concept (that a family treasure or a tradition is something that is valued and passed down through generations of families).

Ask questions to support your students to develop their own inquiry questions.

- What kinds of questions will give us information about a range of cultural practices?
- What do you want to find out?
- What specific contexts will you investigate?

Prompt them to brainstorm a list of possible contexts; for example, new babies, growing up, weddings, funerals, or celebrations.

Scaffold the students' creation and use of a framework for interviewing someone in their family or community. Organise them into groups in which they can discuss the following questions and record their answers.

- What do we want to know?
- What are useful questions to ask? How do we know?
- How do we ask follow-up questions?

Provide opportunities for English language learners to discuss the content in their first language before formulating questions in English. Give them a chance to interview classmates before family or community (if the interviews are to be in English). In that case it is especially important to provide examples of, and practice with, follow-up questions.

Prompt the students to see the similarities and differences between the traditions they have described. **Model** how to describe these similarities and differences. Use a simple structure, such as:

My question: What are our traditions for eating?

- In our family, we have rules about who eats first. Mum and my gran cook the food and serve all the kids first. Then we go away and play while the grown-ups have their dinner.
- In Sam's family, they ...

What I think

- I think both families value sharing food together and eating as a group. The groups are different, though.

For students who find it a challenge to describe similarities and differences, you could provide support for some of the language for comparisons and contrasts; for example:

- sentences using “different/the same”, “different from/the same as”, “but/and”
- sentences using “more/less/fewer”
- sentences with comparative adverbs (for example, “more quickly/more slowly”)
- sentences using comparative adjectives (such as “faster/slower”, “more crowded”).

3. Considering responses and decisions

Support your students to integrate the big ideas of the topic and to draw conclusions about the importance of family traditions and taonga. By evaluating and deepening their understanding of their own values and traditions, they can better understand those of other people. The writing the students do as they describe their own families' traditions and treasures will support the class to evaluate and compare the traditions and treasures of each person in the class.

Writing demands	Prompts to support planning
<p>The writing demands when considering responses and decisions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describing traditions and taonga (using appropriate structures and language features) developing and explaining conclusions about the values of traditions and treasures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What writing will best support the students to describe and explain what they already know and understand? Have I accessed enough useful models of texts for us to explore? Am I clear about the structure and the features of the descriptions that I am looking for?

Task: Students communicate their knowledge and understanding

Students Possible responses to the task	Teacher Possible deliberate acts of teaching
<p>Students describe and explain a taonga.</p> <p><i>The thing thats special in our family is a photo of Dad's koro. The photo is very old and faded but his face is smiling. It hangs on the wall in my Nan's hallway. The photo is special because we are proud of koro. One day there was a big earthquake and the glass broke. But Nan got it fixed and she says it is as good as new. Now when we go near she says, 'Watch out you kids, that was a message from koro to be careful'! Dad says its important to remember our tipuna. They are whanau. A taonga is something that familys look after because it has an important message for everyone. For my whanau, all our tipuna are special, because they looked after everybody. I think All familys have taonga and they are proud of and look after.</i></p>	<p>Model the effect of adding more detail to descriptive sentences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The violin is made of wood" could become "Although the violin is the same colour front and back, my grandad told me that it is made from different kinds of wood." <p>Note: Adding more detail to sentences often means adding clauses and creating complex sentences. English language learners will need support with this.</p> <p>Prompt the students to improvise on sentences from a text they have read. Support them to understand that writers deliberately choose specific words for effect.</p>
<p>Students describe and explain a cultural tradition.</p> <p><i>When my cusin William got his hair cut for the frist time it was a special day. My aunty and uncle started to plan the cerimoney when he was born.Lots of our family came. Even from the islands. William was nirvus, specially when everyone cut a peice off his hair. But he was happy because he got lots of money and gifts. We had lots of nice things to eat and on Sunday we all went to church. William will always remember his special day. Haircutting cerimoney is important for people in the Cook Islands. It is something we always do. Although the cerimoney is diffrent nowadays, Dad says it is a good reason for everyone to get together.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The thing that is very special in our family is my Granny Hilda's pie tin. It's old and black and scratched</i> ("Family Treasures", SJ 1.3.07) could become "The thing that is special in our family is my grandad's violin. It's old but polished and shiny." <p>Model the effect of subject-specific vocabulary when describing a particular place or tradition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The church is big, with rows of wooden pews for people to sit on. At the front there is an altar with candlesticks and tall, white candles.</i> <p>Prompt and build on the students' prior knowledge of the features and structure of a personal narrative or recount. Model how to recount by sharing (orally) a personal story that describes a particular way of doing things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>When my nana died ...</i> <i>When my brother got married ...</i> <p>Give feedback on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific structures and language use that enhance understanding of the reasons for traditions specific vocabulary choices when evaluating family traditions or taonga.
<p>What the writing shows</p> <p>Both pieces of writing use the structures and language of description and explanation. The specific content and language choices in each case represent the students' understanding of the topic and the conclusions they have drawn. For example, the inclusion of Nan's message and the use of a complex sentence to include dialogue add more information about the importance of the photo. The use of Dad's reported speech also supports the importance of tipuna and whānau. The second piece of writing also provides specific detail – in a narrative form – to describe the process ("everyone cut a peice off his hair", "We had lots of nice things to eat"). The statements "It is something we always do" and "Dad says it is a good reason for everyone to get together" demonstrate the student's understanding of why the ceremony is special.</p>	