Hurly Burly

by Paul Mason

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 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 multiple opportunities for revisiting the text.

"Hurly Burly" is a spooky morality tale set in the New Zealand gold rush and based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. John Macbeth is returning to camp when he sees three wild and withered creatures stirring a foul stew and incantating "double, double, toil, and trouble". The unearthly creatures prophesise his future riches. When John returns to the camp, his brother Duncan announces that he has struck gold and asks John to head into town to register his claim. The story takes a dark turn when John's wife Sarah encourages him to murder his brother and take the claim as his own.

This story:

- is a dark tale of conspiracy, greed, and the supernatural
- is inspired by Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*
- incorporates quotations from *Macbeth*
- uses Shakespearean-style syntax
- is rich in figurative language.

A PDF of the text is available at www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz

Texts related by theme   "Waiting for Toni" SJ L4 2016 | "Hatter's Gold" SJ L4 2015 | "Much Ado" SJ L4 2018

Text characteristics   Opportunities for strengthening students' reading behaviours

Macbeth wishes the awful hurly burly in his head would go away. Won't it leave him in peace? He is tired, so tired. Macbeth turns to his wife. His voice breaks as he speaks. "If we should fail?"

"We fail," says Sarah. She reaches over and rubs a smooth hand across his cheek. "But screw your courage to the sticking place, and we'll not fail."

"Greatness was promised," Macbeth says weakly.

Sarah nods. "In the morning, I'll go to the warden and make the claim in your name. And you … " Her voice drops away. She gets to her feet and begins to clear her husband's plate and cutlery from the table. She pauses for a moment, then leaves the bread knife behind. "Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it, John."

"Oh, Sarah," he whispers, "so foul and fair a day I have not seen."

sophisticated themes, complex plots, and abstract ideas, requiring students to interpret and synthesise elements within the story to understand the underlying conflict for the main character

"Months by this blasted creek," says his brother. "Finally she pays out."

Duncan continues to blather, but Macbeth isn't paying attention. The creatures' voices fill his head. *Proclaimer of gold. As rich as a king.* But Duncan was the one to find the gold. The claim is his. How then is he, John Macbeth, to become rich?

He feels Duncan shake his arm. "You're not listening, brother. You must go into town and register my claim."

"Me?" says Macbeth.

Duncan spits. "I'm not letting this place out of my sight."

"All right, Duncan," Macbeth says.

"As soon as you're ready," his brother coaxes. "It's well it were done quickly."

Macbeth realises he's still carrying his load. He drops his shovel and removes his

complex layers of meaning, requiring students to infer meanings or make judgements about characters' actions and motives

No sooner does Macbeth stumble into the tiny camp – a miserable collection of canvas and wood, clinging to the bank of the creek – than Duncan rushes up, slipping and sliding in the mud. There is no hiding the nervous light in his eyes. "It's finally happened, John. Come!"

Duncan leads him to the tent as if he is a schoolboy. He points a shaking finger at the pan resting on the table inside. A circle of yellow lines the bottom. A golden round.

"Colour," Macbeth whispers. He stares at the pan, then back at Duncan. His heart knocks at his ribs.

a variety of sentences, including long complex sentences containing a lot of information, requiring students to use their knowledge of text structures and features to gain an understanding of the setting, plot, and character motives

Finally he reaches his cottage. Sarah opens the door and throws her arms around her husband. "You come with news?" she asks.

"Great news," says Macbeth.

After a wash with hot water and a change of clothes, Macbeth tells it all again – more leisurely this time. The strange creatures in the bush. The prophetic greeting. How they spoke of gold. The talk of riches, and finally the golden round in Duncan's pan.

"I wanted to question them further, but they made themselves air into which they vanished," Macbeth finishes. "They promised greatness, Sarah."

Sarah covers her mouth as she listens. "The instruments of darkness tell us truths," she murmurs at last. In her eyes, Macbeth sees the stirring of black and deep desires.

"They spoke two truths," Macbeth admits.

"And what of the third?" asks Sarah. "As rich as a king."

Macbeth sops up the last of his dinner with his bread. "But the find is Duncan's."

metaphor, analogy, and connotative language that is open to interpretation, requiring students to make inferences and draw conclusions about actions and events

Text and language challenges

Some of the suggestions for possible supporting strategies may be more useful before reading, but they can be used at any time in response to students' needs.

Go to The Learning Progression Frameworks – Reading: "Making sense of text: vocabulary knowledge" and "Making sense of text: using knowledge of text structure and features" to find detailed illustrations showing you how students develop expertise and make progress in these aspects.

VOCABULARY

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including "cascades", "brim", "burrows", "withered", "huddling", "scowling", "foul stew", "steadies", "ponga", "prophecies", "mortal knowledge", "ignites", "swivels", "canvas", "blasted", "blather", "coaxes", "sodden", "warden", "lashes", "tempest", "spurs", "silhouettes", "hover", "murk", "an imagining", "blunders on", "leisurely", "prophetic", "sops up", "dreadful mutter", "foul and fair", "acts [of a play]", "victorious", "heath", "predictions", "ambitious", "ruthless", "tragedy", "conspiracy", "chaos"

- References to goldmining, including "gold flecks", "a golden round", "colour", "pays out", "claim", "register [a claim]", "the find"

- References to the supernatural, including "not creatures of this Earth", "instruments of darkness", "supernatural", "unknown power"

- Words spoken by supernatural beings written in italics, including "*Double, double, toil and trouble. Fire burn and cauldron bubble*", "*All hail, Macbeth!*", "*proclaimer of gold*", "*rich as a king hereafter*", "*be bloody, bold, and resolute*"

- Idioms such as "packing the whole thing in", "finally she pays out", "travels light", "he'd do right by us", "blinded by a thirst for power", "hunger for gold"

- Multiple Shakespearean quotes and metaphors embedded in the text, including "hurly burly", "look into the seeds of time", "absolute trust", "as breath into the wind", "tempest spurs him on", "a black thought", "the milk of human kindness", "screw your courage to the sticking place, and we'll not fail", "look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it"

Possible supporting strategies

- Identify words or phrases that may be unfamiliar. Remind the students of strategies for working out unfamiliar vocabulary, such as looking at the context and thinking about the surrounding information, finding root words, using knowledge of word patterns and prefixes or suffixes, and making connections to prior knowledge.

- Explain that the story is based on a play by Shakespeare that was written over 400 years ago. Reassure the students that they don't need to understand every word or phrase, especially on a first reading. Explore this article on the British Council's website for ways to make Shakespeare easy for English language learners.

- Explore words and phrases that were coined by Shakespeare, some of which may be familiar to students, for example, "in a pickle", "heart of gold", and even the word "bedroom".

- Watch this animated version of *Macbeth* on YouTube, which includes many of the phrases used in "Hurly Burly", including "filthy air", "wild and withered", "look into the seeds of time", and "hurly burly" itself. The first seven minutes are sufficient to make the similarities between the themes, tone, and language clear.

- Make use of online plain English translations of *Macbeth*, for example, this version of Act 1 Scene Five, in which Lady Macbeth chides Macbeth for being too full of "the milk of human kindness".

- Introduce the students to an abridged version of the text of the witches' incantations, encouraging them to enjoy the rhythm of the language and the foul ingredients in their stew. Note that the full version contains references that are not appropriate for students at this level.

- Have the students build words into a picture, using the following process. 1. Choose twelve topic words. 2. Tell the students that they are going to draw a picture incorporating the words. 3. Say the first word and explain what it means. 4. Ask each student to draw a picture that explains the word on a large sheet of paper. 5. The students continue the picture, incorporating the second word, the third word, and so on, until they build each of the twelve words into one picture. 6. Say the words again slowly and ask the students to write each word over its representation.

- *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

- Some knowledge of the history of goldmining in Aotearoa New Zealand and the concept of gold fever

- An awareness of Shakespeare and his contribution to the English language and to literature

- Understanding that the English language has changed significantly since the 1600s

Possible supporting strategies

- Draw on the students' prior knowledge about the gold rush in Aotearoa in the 1860s. To build prior knowledge for English language learners who may have very limited knowledge of the gold rush, provide visual images to support their discussion. The National Library services to school section on "Mining in New Zealand" has some suitable images.

- Have the students share what they know about Shakespeare and his works before reading the story.

- Watch the YouTube video Why you should read *Macbeth* for a useful overview of the play on which the story is based. This video includes a number of lines that feature in "Hurly Burly". Like the story, it has dark themes, so preview the video to determine its suitability before showing it to the class.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE	Possible supporting strategies
• Straightforward chronology • An introduction that jumps straight into the historical setting, quickly followed by a surreal element that may be confusing for some students • Direct and embedded quotes from *Macbeth*, some of which are in italics • Some unusual syntax and an archaic tone that emulates Shakespearean English • A large number of adjectives, some of which are uncommon • Figurative language, much of it taken from the original play • Abstractions such as "finds his voice", "greatness was promised", "lost his reason", "nervous light" • An author's note at the end of the story that explains the relationship between "Hurly Burly" and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and gives the author's purpose for writing the story	• Explore the first paragraph together and have the students share their ideas about the setting, using the illustrations to help. • Tell the students that the story is based on a play written over 400 years ago and uses quotations from the original text, so some of the language may be unfamiliar. Explain that they won't necessarily understand every sentence but that Shakespeare was a master of language who often used it in playful and inventive ways. Encourage them to enjoy the sounds, feel, and visual imagery of the language. • Explore some of the sentences that use archaic syntax, for example, "For what reason do you greet me like this?". Have the students work in pairs to rephrase the sentences in plain English, sharing their strategies for working out what each sentence means. • Discuss how words can have multiple meanings and introduce the idea of abstractions. An abstraction is a word that has a concrete meaning used to express a more abstract concept. For example, to "find his voice" means more than just being able to speak – it implies the ability to talk when under pressure. Abstraction is common in all languages but can pose challenges for English language learners. Encourage students to draw on all the information and clues in the text to develop their own definition, then provide them with the real definition and compare that with their own. You can provide them with a simple graphic organiser to do this while reading. • Give the students idioms and metaphors from the story and have them discuss in pairs what they might mean. • Explore the characteristics of a Shakespearean tragedy, many of which are evident in "Hurly Burly", for example, supernatural elements, a character struggling with an internal conflict related to a fatal flaw, and external problems that contribute to a character's fraught decision making.

Sounds and Words

Possible curriculum contexts

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

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 4 – Ideas: Show an increasing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

Level 4 – Language features: Show an increasing understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 4 – Language features: Use a range of language features appropriately, showing an increasing understanding of their effects.

Possible first reading purpose
• Enjoy reading a dark and fantastical tale
• Find out about the dilemma John Macbeth is facing.

Possible subsequent reading purposes
• Identify the Shakespearean style and features
• Explore the factors (internal and external) that are influencing John Macbeth's struggle
• Explore the precise verbs and adjectives used by the writer.

Possible writing purposes
• Write a diary entry for John Macbeth describing the events of the story
• Rewrite the story as a play
• Use some of the descriptive language in the story to write a fantastical story of your own.

The New Zealand Curriculum

Instructional focus – Reading

English Level 4 – Ideas: Show an increasing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts; Language features: Show an increasing understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

Go to The Learning Progression Frameworks – Reading: "Reading for literary experience", "Making sense of text: using knowledge of text structure and features", and "Making sense of text: reading critically" to find detailed illustrations showing how students develop expertise and make progress in these aspects.

First reading

- Share the purpose for reading.
- Remind the students of strategies that are useful on a first reading, such as rereading to look for clues, making connections with their prior knowledge, and reading on to see if the meaning becomes clearer.
- Explain that the story is based on a famous play by Shakespeare, and have the students share what they know about Shakespeare and his writing. You may like to introduce the students to the story of *Macbeth* before reading "Hurly Burly" by showing them an animated version online.
- Have the students share their ideas in pairs about what they think the title of the story might mean. Note that the paragraph at the end of the story explains how the writer has interpreted "hurly burly", a term used by one of the witches in *Macbeth*.
- Ask the students to begin reading the story, stopping at the bottom of the first page to check for understanding. *Where and when do you think the story is set? What are the witches prophesying? What feelings or images does the story evoke? What aspects of the text are unusual or challenging?*
- Have the students share their predictions about what will happen next. If the students are familiar with the story of *Macbeth*, prompt them to make connections between the play and the story. Remind them to keep their predictions in mind as they read and to check and revise them as they work through the story.

If the students require more scaffolding

- English language learners may find this story challenging because of the Shakespearean phrases and syntax. Consider providing them with a brief plot summary prior to their first reading. They could also shadow-read the story (reading the text aloud just after you and trying to imitate your speech patterns and pronunciation).
- Build up the students' prior knowledge of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* using animated versions online. Explore some of the phrases and metaphors that Paul Mason has borrowed from *Macbeth*.
- Reassure the students that it doesn't matter if they don't understand all of the language and that many adults have a similar experience when reading or listening to Shakespeare. Encourage them to focus on getting a general sense of what is happening and the roles that various characters play.
- Break the story into chunks, allowing time for response and discussion. Remind the students of strategies they can use as they read to get a deeper understanding of what is happening, for example, visualising.

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

Give pairs of students examples of metaphors used in the story and have them discuss their meaning and effectiveness. Examples include:

- "Do they look into the seeds of time?"
- "As breath into the wind"
- "The instruments of darkness tell us truths"
- "Duncan is a step on which you must either fall down or leap over".

Have the students discuss their interpretations in small groups, exploring any alternative interpretations.

The students:

- analyse and interpret the meaning of the metaphors used in the story and how they relate to the plot
- evaluate the effectiveness of the figurative language in terms of creating a mysterious, secretive tone.

The teacher

Have the students design a storyboard that shows the main events in "Hurly Burly". Encourage them to limit the number of scenes to eight, and have them discuss their chosen scenes with a partner before completing their storyboard.

Where appropriate, the students could include a quote or metaphor from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to make clear the connection between the story and the play.

The students:

- identify the sequence of events and key characters in "Hurly Burly" to create a storyboard with simple illustrations and captions
- use their storyboards to retell the story to a partner, explaining why they chose their particular main events
- make connections with Shakespeare's story of *Macbeth.*

The teacher

As a class, discuss what it means to be conflicted about something. Have the students share a time when they felt confused about what to do.

Co-construct a graphic organiser that shows some of the factors that are contributing to John Macbeth's struggle, for example:

- external factors such as his lack of luck as a goldminer or the grim weather
- internal factors such as his own thoughts and feelings
- supernatural factors such as the witches' prophecy and the effect this has on him
- the needs or wants of other people such as Sarah and Duncan.

Have the students look for evidence of each factor in the text and then explain the effect of each one. The students could rank the factors in terms of the impact they are likely to have on what happens next, sharing and debating their ideas. Use a Three Level Reading Guide to assist students to infer this from the text, focusing on John's internal conflict.

The students:

- share their understanding of what an internal conflict is and relate this to an event in their own lives
- think critically about factors in the story that are leading John Macbeth down a dark path
- evaluate the statements on the Three Level Reading Guide, refering to the text for evidence, then compare their answers with a partner's until agreement is reached, and then share with the whole group, while debating their responses to the level 3 inferential questions
- identify the specific ways that internal, external, and supernatural factors have an effect on John Macbeth
- evaluate the relative impact of each factor.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You and your partner came up with some really interesting interpretations of the metaphor you were given. It was good to see you reflecting on your interpretations when you read the metaphor in the context of the story.*

METACOGNITION

- *What strategies did you use to help you understand the Shakespearean style of the language? What effect did that style have on you as a reader?*
- *How did the story make you feel? Do you think people watching Shakespeare's play 400 years ago would have had similar feelings? Why or why not?*
- *How does this story compare with other Paul Mason stories you have read? What similarities and differences can you find?*

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English Level 4 – Language features: Use a range of language features appropriately, showing an increasing understanding of their effects.

Go to The Learning Progression Frameworks – Writing: "Creating texts for literary purposes", "Writing meaningful text: using knowledge of text structure and features", and "Using writing to think and organise for learning" to find detailed illustrations showing you how students develop expertise and make progress in these aspects.

Text excerpts from "Hurly Burly"	Examples of text characteristics	Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)
Page 24 John Macbeth bows his head to the storm and follows the path of the creek back to camp. The air is filthy. Cold rain cascades off the brim of his hat, and the wind drives it into his eyes. A shovel leans heavily on his shoulder, a pan burrows into his back … and for all that, Macbeth has nothing to show. He adjusts his load and thinks about packing the whole thing in, not for the first time. There's no gold out here. Yet what would he say to Duncan? His brother needs him.	**SETTING THE SCENE** *Writers use the opening of a story to set the scene, often providing important information about the time and setting and a goal or challenge the main character is facing.*	Revise how the opening paragraph of a story should draw readers in. Discuss the importance of readers being able to visualise what is happening as they try to make sense of what the story will be about. Have the students reread the opening paragraph, identifying information it provides about: • the main character(s) • the time • the place • a goal or challenge that the character is facing. Brainstorm words that describe the tone of the opening paragraph. Have the students analyse the words and images that the writer has used to create this tone. Discuss ways that this paragraph sets up the reader to understand John Macbeth's struggles, including his subsequent internal conflict. To help English language learners to visualise, use words from the first paragraph to complete a "Build Words into a Picture" type of activity. (See the vocabulary section above.) Have the students work with a partner to review the opening paragraph of their own writing, identifying ways that it sets the scene and discussing whether a reader might need more clues to understand what the story is about. Provide opportunities for the students to revise and develop their writing.
Page 24 By the weak glow of the fire, Macbeth sees bone-white skin and dark hair, scowling faces hidden by midnight cloaks. A bony hand reaches out and stirs a foul stew.	**DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE** *Writers choose specific words and phrases to convey images and to describe scenes and events vividly.*	Explore the difference between general adjectives such as wet, pale, and sad with specific adjectives such as sodden, bone-white, and miserable. Prompt the students to see that these specific adjectives intensify the writing and make it easier to visualise or feel. Have the students share what they saw in their minds when they read about the witches. • *What words would you use to describe this scene?* • *What mental image is the writer trying to create? How has he done this?* • *What can you see, hear, feel, smell, or taste as you read it?* Explore the ways that the writer has used specific details that relate to multiple senses to capture the scene. Have the students explore the precise verbs he used and add them to a word bank of strong verbs. Give the students a five-senses graphic organiser to use as they plan a piece of descriptive writing. Remind them that they can use a thesaurus to help them identify more specific adjectives. Have the students read their writing to a partner for peer response, asking what the partner visualised and which words and details were particularly effective. Have the students reflect on whether the words they used created the image they wanted or if they need to use stronger verbs or more specific adjectives.

Text excerpts from "Hurly Burly"	Examples of text characteristics	Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)
Page 4 But Macbeth knows his wife says what he already imagines – a golden round, a king. Duncan alone stands in their way. He hears the dreadful mutter from the bush. *Bloody, bold, resolute*. Macbeth shakes it from his head. "Duncan said he'd do right by us." "You're too full of the milk of human kindness." "But I dare not, Sarah." "Don't say 'I dare not', say 'I will'." Macbeth closes his eyes. Duncan, his own brother! "Absolute trust," he hears him say. Macbeth wishes the awful hurly burly in his head would go away. Won't it leave him in peace? He is tired, so tired.	**INTERNAL CONFLICT** *An inner conflict is struggle that takes place in a character's mind because of their conflicting emotions, desires, or fears.* *A character experiencing an inner conflict is often in two minds about what they should do or what they should believe.*	Introduce the students to the characteristics of a Shakespearean tragedy that are evident in the story, in particular, supernatural elements, a character struggling with an internal conflict, and external difficulties. Discuss what an internal conflict is and have the students share their experiences in pairs. Ask them to identify and discuss ways that John Macbeth is struggling inside himself, exploring the text for examples of conflicting emotions, desires, and fears. Have the students analyse the way the writer shows the hurly burly of John's mind and the turmoil John is experiencing. As a class, brainstorm examples of other situations that might lead a character to experience inner conflict. The students can select an idea of interest to develop further, writing a passage that shows a character's conflicted thoughts. They may like to draw on the techniques used in "Hurly Burly" as a basis for writing their own passages.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *I can see some great developments in your second draft in terms of strengthening the adjectives and verbs you used. It's great to see you building your vocabulary and playing with new words. Try reading your new draft aloud to someone to see how effective it is.*

METACOGNITION

- *What strategies did you use to strengthen the verbs and adjectives in your writing? How successful are they in helping your reader visualise what is happening? How do you know?*

The Literacy Learning Progressions